Tuesday February 3 1998

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The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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Final hours of Karla Faye Tucker

Dead woman walking



G2 with European weather

40 years after the Munich crash

Stand up if you hate Man U...

G2 pages 4/5. Plus Linda Grant

Education

A teacher's work is never done

G2 pages 12-13

Branson victory over disgraced Camelot chief

Bribes verdict ignites lottery crisis



Richard Branson celebrates on the steps of the High Court in London after his victory over former Camelot director Guy Snowden PHOTOGRAPH: GERRY PENNY

Kamal Ahmed
Media Correspondent

THE NATIONAL Lottery was facing crisis last night after a director of the company that runs it was found guilty of attempting to bribe Richard Branson.

Guy Snowden, the chairman and chief executive of G-Tech, immediately resigned as a director of lottery operator Camelot.



Damages of £100,000 and costs of £3 million were awarded against Mr Snowden and G-Tech after a High Court jury found in Mr Branson's favour.

Mr Snowden's disgrace represented a huge embarrassment to Camelot and immediately revived questions about the future of Peter Davis, the lottery's regulator.

Mr Davis had reacted sharply to the court verdict by delivering an ultimatum to Camelot to sever all links with Mr Snowden within 24 hours.

But Mr Davis, the director general of Oflot, found himself the target of strong criticism from Mr Branson for his role in originally agreeing that Mr Snowden and G-Tech were fit and proper to participate in the lottery.

Mr Branson urged the appointment of a new director as quickly as possible to ensure that the public kept faith with the lottery. He said Mr Davis's position was becoming increasingly untenable.

"During the course of the trial it emerged that Mr Davis, who awarded the lottery to G-Tech and Camelot, had serious reservations from day one," he said. "Camelot should never have been allowed to pass the probity test with G-Tech as shareholders."

Mr Davis, whose contract comes up for renewal in October, told Channel 4 News that it was up to the Secretary of State to decide whether he should be offered a new term as director general. He had yet to come to a decision about whether he would apply for the job.

The Government has demanded an inquiry by the director general into how Mr Snowden's bribery attempt — a bid to get Mr Branson to withdraw his application to run the lottery — only surfaced two years after they were originally made.

The allegations came to light on a Panorama programme in December 1995. Mr Branson told the programme that during a lunch at his house in 1993 Mr Snowden had said to him: "In what way can we help you, Richard? I mean what can we do for you personally."

Mr Branson said that he was shocked by Mr Snowden who went on to say: "Everybody needs something."

Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, said the matter was "very serious" and that he would be monitoring the situation personally.

"It is right that Guy Snowden should resign immediately in the light of the jury's verdict.

"The director general of the National Lottery will need to examine with the utmost care the evidence provided in court and take any necessary action to ensure that the lottery is run with complete propriety."

After the court case, Mr Branson said: "It has emerged from this case that those running the lottery are extracting a billion pounds in profit ... both as shareholders and suppliers to it," he said. "That is a billion pounds that could have gone to charity."

Although he said he no longer had an interest in running the lottery he would help any consortium that wanted to run it with all the profits going to charity.

Mr Davis, who gave evidence for Mr Snowden during the three-week trial, said his position had not been directly challenged. "My veracity was not questioned in the court," he said. "I'm going to continue to do the job given to me by the Lottery Act. I have been in contact with the chairman of Camelot group ... to say that I expect action to be put in hand within 24 hours."

Mr Davis said he would be studying transcripts of the court hearing but said that G-Tech's 22.5 per cent in Camelot was not at present at issue.

Mr Branson had sued Guy Snowden and G-Tech for saying that his allegations about the bribe attempt were untrue. Mr Snowden had counter-sued Mr Branson for making the allegations.

Camelot sought to distance itself from the bribery allegations. A spokeswoman said the case had no implications for the running of the lottery.

Mr Snowden said he would be returning to America with his wife. "I came to this country to do a job and I am very proud of the job that G-Tech has accomplished and Camelot have accomplished," he said.

"I always knew it was going to be a uphill battle taking on a figure of the importance and the access of Mr Branson. But however great the odds, I had to defend my personal and professional reputation — tell the truth and challenge these dreadful allegations."

Murky backdrop, page 5

OUT



'I always knew it was going to be an uphill battle taking on a figure of the importance and the access of Mr Branson.'

Guy Snowden

OUT?



'My veracity was not in question. I'm going to continue to do the job that's given to me by the Lottery Act.'

Peter Davis

OUTRAGE



'It is right that Guy Snowden should resign in the light of the verdict. The key issue is to make sure the public can retain full confidence in lottery.'

Chris Smith

Rome falls for bogus art treasures

City's famous statues replaced with plastic fakes to protect them

John Hooper in Rome

THE job of safeguarding cultural treasures, said Eugenio La Rocca, picking his words with exquisite care, "needs to be carried out without clamour, though we never intended to turn it into a clandestine activity".

There again, anyone might proceed with caution if he were admitting to the world that he had taken away some of Rome's best-loved works of art and replaced them with copies made of the same material as false teeth.

The truth is out. For six years the Rome city council, whose heritage department Mr La Rocca heads, has been spiriting away tombs, statues and busts and replacing them with plastic fakes.

Those who fear it could be the first step towards the Eternal City becoming a replica of itself will not be reassured to learn that the author of the copies, Romolo Felice, aged 58, began his trade as a special-effects man on the film Ben Hur.

Mr Felice, his son and three brothers-in-law have turned out a stream of reproductions so good that no one has noticed the absence of the originals. They are responsible for two ersatz sarcophagi near the entrance to the gardens of the Villa Pamphilj, a phoney Venus in the grounds of the Villa Celimontana on the Caelian Hill and a host of bogus statues and busts dotted around the 16th century Villa Aldobrandini.

It has also emerged that, when the Museo Borghese was reopened amid much hullaballoo last year, all the sculptures gracing the courtyard had been replaced with reproductions. The elegant neo-classical nudes are made of "concrete with a patina of marble dust", a council official said.



Statue, made of plastic, at the Villa Borghese in Rome

"They are so faithful to the original that already thieves have taken them for real, decapitated one to make off with the head and tried to carry away another," he added.

Theft is merely one reason the council felt it had to act. Pollution, vandalism and erosion by rain have all taken their toll.

Carla Benocci of the council's heritage department told the newspaper La Repubblica, which unveiled the ploy: "There is no alternative to copies if one wants to conserve monuments. Those in the Aldobrandini gardens were in a striking state of decay."

What was once the mansion of Pope Clement VIII now has five statues and three busts made of plastic, including well-known figures of Diana and Minerva. The originals are to be put on display in a museum being built in the grounds.

The council plans to replace hundreds of works of art which are currently at the mercy of the weather and the spray-can artist. Statues dating back to the 17th century are to be taken out of the gardens of the Villas Borghese, Torlonia, Celimontana, Sciarra and Pamphilj.

Catholics face 'unholy war'

John Mullin
Ireland Correspondent

MAVERICK loyalists in Northern Ireland are threatening to begin "an unholy war" against Catholics today after death threats were made against the family of their murdered leader, Billy Wright.

The Loyalist Volunteer Force, responsible for at least six of the recent sectarian killings, said last night it would unleash its terror campaign unless the threats were lifted within 12 hours.

The LVF's campaign after Wright's murder in the Maze prison on December 27 has led to the worst violence in Northern Ireland for five years and pulled loyalist paramilitaries officially observing a ceasefire back into violence.

The Ulster Freedom Fighters, responsible for three of the recent murders of Catholics, said 11 days ago it was returning to the ceasefire after its "measured military response" to what it termed "republican aggression".

The RUC confirmed it had warned Wright's family and his girlfriend of the threats last week. It was unclear who was behind them, but suspicion fell on the Catholic Reaction Force, a small group believed to involve IRA members.

The CRF is behind threats to Protestant workmen in the republican heartland of south Armagh.

The CRF is also suspected of threatening three prominent Protestants in Londonderry. One of them, Andrew Davidson, an Ulster Unionist councillor regarded as a moderate, has gone into hiding.

Wright's father, David, said yesterday: "I am just living from day to day and house to house. I don't know why they are targeting me."

The Sinn Fein chairman, Mitchel McLaughlin, called for the threats to be withdrawn. "Sinn Fein repudiates

turn to page 2, column 5



1998 Observer sports calendar

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Sketch

Cook caught in the crossfire



Simon Hoggart

ROBIN Cook answered questions on Iraq yesterday. This made a change. It was a nice surprise to learn that MPs had any interest in the topic at all.

For the past few days British coverage of the situation has gone bonkers. It was like the Monty Python sketch called, I think, It's The Arts.

They are interviewing someone called Arthur "Two Sheds" Jackson, a composer whose latest work is about to be premiered. He wants to talk about the composition; all they want to do is ask about his two sheds. So now every news programme goes something like this: Foreign Secretary, you've just spoken to Madeleine Albright.

Cook: Yes, I have, and I offered Britain's full support in her attempts to build a coalition against Saddam Hussein, coupled with the promise that we would join in military action if necessary.

Interviewer: But Robin — may I call you Robin? — for how many days following the sacking of Ann Bullen did you consider making Mrs Regan your diary secretary?

Cook: As I said, all of us hope and pray that force will not be required. But it is clear from Saddam's previous actions that he is most unlikely to comply with the UN resolutions if the threat of force is not present.

Interviewer: Quite so, Rob. All right if I call you Rob? Surely, Rob, it's unprecedented for a minister to make a public, personal attack on the competence of a civil servant he has just sacked.

Cook: Look, the important thing is that Saddam is making enough anthrax to fill two warheads per week. If we don't take action now, the world will have a very long time to regret it later.

Interviewer: But, Bobbity old boy — that all right with you? — are you seriously proposing to take your fancy woman with you to the States? Doesn't this imply that you have taken leave of your senses? Bobbity?

And so on. The excuse for all this stuff about Gaynor Regan — to which I have cheerfully contributed — is that it enables us to assess Mr Cook's judgment. But at the very time when Saddam Hussein is likely to test his judgment to its limits, we cannot judge that judgment because there's little in the papers except stuff about Mrs Regan and how she throws light on his judgment.

In fact, he put on a display of considerable calm and skill yesterday, not least because the real battle was going on behind him, among Labour MPs who feel able at last to relieve their deep, atavistic, enemic and all-consuming hatred of each other.

David Winnick (War Party, Walsall N) said that if we had listened to the critics, Kuwait would not have been freed in 1991 — "Now we are accused of being the warmongers!"

Mr Dale Campbell-Savours (War, Workington) was sitting directly in front of Mr Tony Benn (Peace at all costs, Chesterfield). But he turned painfully round to congratulate Mr Winnick in the most public way he could manage.

Gerald Kaufman (War Now!, Gorton) told Mr Cook to pay no attention to those MPs "who, seven years ago, scurried off to truckle favour with Saddam Hussein while he was holding British people hostage," a reference to Mr George Galloway (Peace, Glasgow Kelvin).

Jeremy Corbyn (Peace, Islington N) begged: "Should we not be looking for a truly peaceful solution to this problem?" He sounded like John Lennon in his declining years. Mr Cook replied drily that it was difficult to see in that question where the germs of a peaceful solution might be found.

In the end the only (very indirect) reference to Mrs Regan came from Mr Cook himself when, asked to comment on an article in the Mail On Sunday, said it was "probably as unreliable" as many other reports in that paper recently.

Heavens! Commons debates important topic shock! Never mind; tomorrow they return to debate the greatest scandal since last month's scandal.

Saddam refuses to open secret sites ☐ US seeks support for air strikes ☐ Israel prepares missiles

Iraq denies weapons offer



Volunteers training to defend Iraq in case of US attack chant anti-US slogans yesterday in Baghdad PHOTOGRAPH: KARIM SAHIB

Ian Black and Ewen MacAskill in London and Julian Borger in Jerusalem

THE United States and Britain were last night still locked on a collision course with Saddam Hussein as Russian mediators struggled to win concessions to avert a military outcome to the crisis over United Nations weapons inspections.

After a confusing flurry of statements, Baghdad insisted it had not agreed to allow UN inspectors into off-limits presidential palaces — though the reported offer had already met a hostile reception in Washington and London.

Iraq denied Russian claims that President Saddam was willing to meet the chief UN arms inspector, Richard Butler, to discuss the stand-off that has brought threats of "substantial" US-led military action.

"The discussions are going on and they are quite, quite detailed," said Riyad al-Qaisi, an Iraqi deputy foreign minister.

Russia was clearly eager for success. Boris Yeltsin telephoned Bill Clinton with news of the offer but reactions were swift and negative. Bill Richardson, the US ambassador to the UN, said bluntly: "This so-called compromise is unacceptable."

Tony Blair's spokesman was dismissive: "We need some convincing that this is any more than game-playing," he said. "I do not think it much changes where we are." Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, expected to consult Arab leaders later this week, told the Commons: "Although we are pursuing a diplomatic solution, we have not, nor will we, rule out the use of force.

"Without effective ... monitoring Iraq could produce enough anthrax every week to fill two missile warheads and could within weeks be producing a large volume of nerve gas."

Russia had reported that President Saddam was ready to allow UN inspectors to visit eight previously closed "presidential" sites as representatives of their governments and to be accompanied by diplomats from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

But the grounds adjoining the sites would be excluded from inspections — rendering the offer meaningless in the light of reports that great efforts have been made to conceal suspected chemical and biological weapons programmes.

Since last year President Saddam has refused to allow the UN to check some 60 sites, including about 40 presidential palaces, on grounds of national sovereignty. The UN is insisting on "full and unconditional access".

Yesterday's developments came after Mr Yeltsin warned that military action was "fraught with unpredictable consequences and would cause big casualties among civilians".

Israel began preparing its defences against the threat of an Iraqi attack by setting up US-made Patriot missiles near the Dimona nuclear reactor in the Negev desert.

Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of state, spent the day in Saudi Arabia as part of a Middle East and European tour to drum up support for air strikes.

She said that Washington and Riyadh had agreed that "if diplomacy fails to achieve a solution, Saddam Hussein will be responsible for the grave consequences".

Apart from Kuwait, only Britain has thrown its weight unconditionally behind Washington. Six Sea Harrier jump jets left their base at Yeovilton to join the carrier Illustrious in the Mediterranean, en route to replace HMS Invincible in the Gulf.

Mr Richardson said Washington would support a proposal by the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, to allow Iraq to increase its oil sales under the oil-for-food deal from $2 billion (£1.25 billion) to $5.2 billion to "to prevent further deterioration in humanitarian conditions".

Iraq has been under stringent sanctions since it invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Living conditions have deteriorated, with malnutrition widespread and children dying for lack of medical care.

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Railtrack ready to rescue Channel tunnel link

Tempting offer for Prescott would save project without extra state aid

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

RAILTRACK last night revealed that it is prepared to rescue the stricken £6 billion Channel Tunnel rail project without an extra state cash handout of £1.2 billion.

In an offer which the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, will find difficult to refuse, Railtrack sources made it clear that the privatised company has the capital to save the 68 mile scheme from London to the Channel coast, but would have to secure the approval of shareholders.

Railtrack yesterday emerged as the only possible contender to take over the scheme from the failed London and Continental Railway consortium, which has collapsed with debts of £500 million. LCR's one-time rival, Eurorail, backed by the National Westminster Bank, has pulled out of talks with the Government through lack of funds.

Railtrack's offer will be tempting for Mr Prescott. Last week LCR pulled out of the beleaguered project when Mr Prescott refused to hand over an extra £1.2 billion of taxpayers' money to the consortium, led by Richard Branson's Virgin group and National Express. LCR said it could not complete the project without the money, but Railtrack insists that it does not need it.

Railtrack and Mr Prescott will start hard bargaining in the next month to get a deal. The biggest obstacle is likely to be Railtrack's insistence on a softer regulatory regime while it completes the project. Tougher rules are expected within three years, and Sir Bob Horton, Railtrack's chairman, will argue that a substantial commercial project cannot proceed while the company is in a straitjacket.

Mr Prescott has to persuade the rail regulator, John Swift, to go easy on Railtrack or the deal could collapse. The Government would then only have British Rail as an alternative, but without the backing of the private sector.

A government deal wth Railtrack would bring a complete change in its relations with the Labour Party, which in opposition threatened to bring the company back into public ownership. Political uncertainty led to it being floated at a knockdown price of £1.9 billion two years go, and investors made a killing.

A senior Railtrack source said: "We were once the black knight with the Labour Party. Now we are regarded as a potential white knight. How times change."

At last year's Labour party conference, Mr Prescott attacked "fat cats" at Railtrack, including Archie Norman, chairman of ASDA, vice chairman of the Tory Party and a Railtrack director.

If Railtrack takes over the rail link, it will assume responsibility for the 1,000 people working on the project.

Doubts about the link have delayed the £400 million Thames 2000 rail scheme between towns to the north and south of London. This is a Railtrack project, but Glenda Jackson, the transport minister, said yesterday that the public inquiry might have to be postponed.

Review

Byrne's night, complete with kilt

Adam Sweeting

David Byrne
Shepherds Bush Empire

SINCE the messy demise of Talking Heads, David Byrne has undergone several mystifying metamorphoses. He has published a book of photography, staged a travelling photographic exhibition, and created an audio-visual installation for a Japanese department store. His solo music has evinced a scientific interest in Latin and Caribbean music, funnelled through Byrne's Luaka Bop label, but his dabblings in ethno-musicology left his fanbase unconvinced. For a while, he threatened to turn into a one-man band, hiking round the globe with a guitar and a beat box.

Then came last year's album, Feelings. It was hailed with sighs of relief from fans and critics, who felt that Byrne had put an end to his dilettantish wanderings and returned to the kind of music-making he does best — limb-twitching pop with cunning infusions of funk, polyrhythms and Manhattan-loft artiness.

His slot at last year's Glastonbury festival met a lukewarm reception, but this Shepherds Bush show was sharp, vivid and insanely infectious. You'd have to excavate deep into the Talking Heads archives to find a show to beat it, and the way Byrne adroitly matched highlights from his solo catalogue with carefully selected Heads songs threw a revealing new light on everything he's been doing for the last 20 years.

The trick was to find a balance between the two halves of Byrne's divided soul, the intellectually self-conscious performance artist and the innovative musician. With the aid of costume changes, a versatile backing band and bags of computer software, Byrne accomplished the feat with panache. Although updated by the late-Nineties gadgetry deployed by drummer/programmer Rea Mochlach and hi-tech pedal steel player Bruce Kaphan, the performance recalled the contagious mix of pop, R&B and studio trickery of the Heads' 1979 album Fear Of Music.

Byrne has sometimes seemed to act out the appearance of weirdness, but there were flashes of real humour in this show. Not every performer would dare to change out of a natty electric-blue suit into kilt, T-shirt and clumping black boots, exposing his thin, hairy legs, but Byrne was having a whale of a time. "Oh preacher man!" he raved in Dance On Vaseline, skidding greasily across the stage, "shoot me with your poison arrow!" He illustrated Miss America by pulling up the hem of his kilt, and ran ostentatiously on the spot for a super-catchy Road To Nowhere. For Take Me To The River, the trickery was rhetorical — "TAKE ME! ... to the river."

He had more devices up his sleeve, especially the weird fluorescent body-suit he wore for Psycho Killer, making him resemble in part a Marvel Comics hero, in part an anatomical specimen. The crowd had surrendered long before that, though, and applauded Byrne with an enthusiasm he must sometimes have feared he would never hear again.

Grim circus routine of animal beatings

CIRCUS animals are being routinely beaten, whipped and clubbed by trainers, according to a report yesterday by animal rights campaigners.

The 18-month study into the use of circus animals by a group called Animal Defenders involved studying the animals, and working practices in winter quarters and travelling circuses.

The report, called The Ugliest Show on Earth, also drew on 400 hours of videotape which included scenes of beatings and long confinements.

One piece of footage featured an elephant being beaten relentlessly with an iron bar.

In another, an infant chimpanzee, 18 months old, is seen being kicked and whipped.

The report claimed that animals were frequently left locked up for long periods on time.

The study said one elephant spent 98 per cent of her time chained in a lorry or tent. Large cats were found to spend 75-80 per cent of their time in cages while horses were locked in their stables for 23 hours a day.

Animal Defenders director Jan Creamer said: "In over 20 years of studying the use of animals and campaigning for animal protection, this is the most appalling abuse I have ever seen.

"Elephants were beaten with pitchforks, shovels, elephant hooks and anything else to hand — on one occasion the animal was brought to the ground screaming.

"It is time that the use of animals in circuses was abandoned and performing animal training centres brought under the Zoo Licensing Act."

In the absence of a ban on the use of animals in the circus trade, Animal Defenders is calling for zoo animals to be protected under the 1981 act which

'Elephants were beaten with pitchforks, shovels and anything else to hand'

regulates standards of animal welfare in zoos and safari parks.

But a spokesman for the Chipperfield circus family said its animals are all seen regularly by veterinary surgeons.

He said: "The companies all employ experienced veterinary surgeons who advise them. Where appropriate the local authority issues licenses for the premises and in order to get a licence they have to be inspected each year.

"Where animals are in quarantine they have to be visited every week by a ministry approved vet."

LVF threat of terror against Catholics

continued from page 1

any threat or any attempt to intimidate anyone on the basis of their religion," he said. "This is a time for neighbour to look after neighbour."

Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, added: "It is very obvious there are people on both sides of the community, who are prepared to use that type of threat to stir up even further sectarian hatred and to thwart the political process."

The LVF's threat comes four days after it promised to stop targeting "innocent Catholics", vowing instead to select what it called known republicans.

But just as the Irish National Liberation Army's murder of Wright, aged 37, was followed by LVF assassinations, so too were any threats against his family always likely to be met with retaliation. There are also suggestions of a power struggle in the LVF, formed by Wright in 1996.

The INLA's political wing, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, denied issuing the threats against Wright's family.

A statement issued with a recognised codeword said: "The LVF wish to state that ... if republicans do not come out and issue those statements of denial within the next 12 hours, the LVF will unleash an unholy war against the nationalist community. These type of sick death threats against the late Billy Wright's family will not be tolerated."

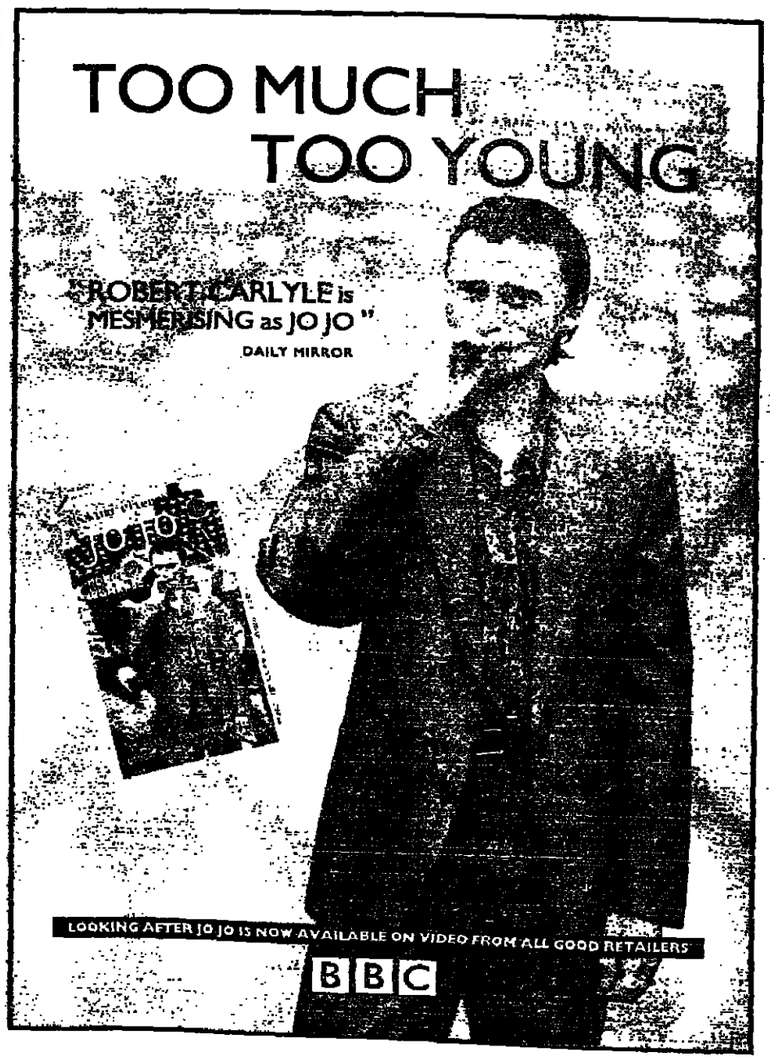
Paedophile allegation delays writer Clarke's investiture

Lucy Patton

THE investiture of science fiction writer Arthur C Clarke as a knight has been postponed after allegations in a Sunday newspaper that he was a paedophile.

The Prince of Wales was due to award a knighthood to Sir Arthur, aged 80, at a ceremony in Colombo tomorrow during a four-day royal visit to Sri Lanka, but St James's Palace confirmed yesterday that the investiture had been postponed at Sir Arthur's request.

The Sunday Mirror report alleged he had admitted being a paedophile. Sir Arthur, British-born author of 2001: A Space Odyssey, said in a statement yesterday he was outraged by the allegations and was seeking legal advice.

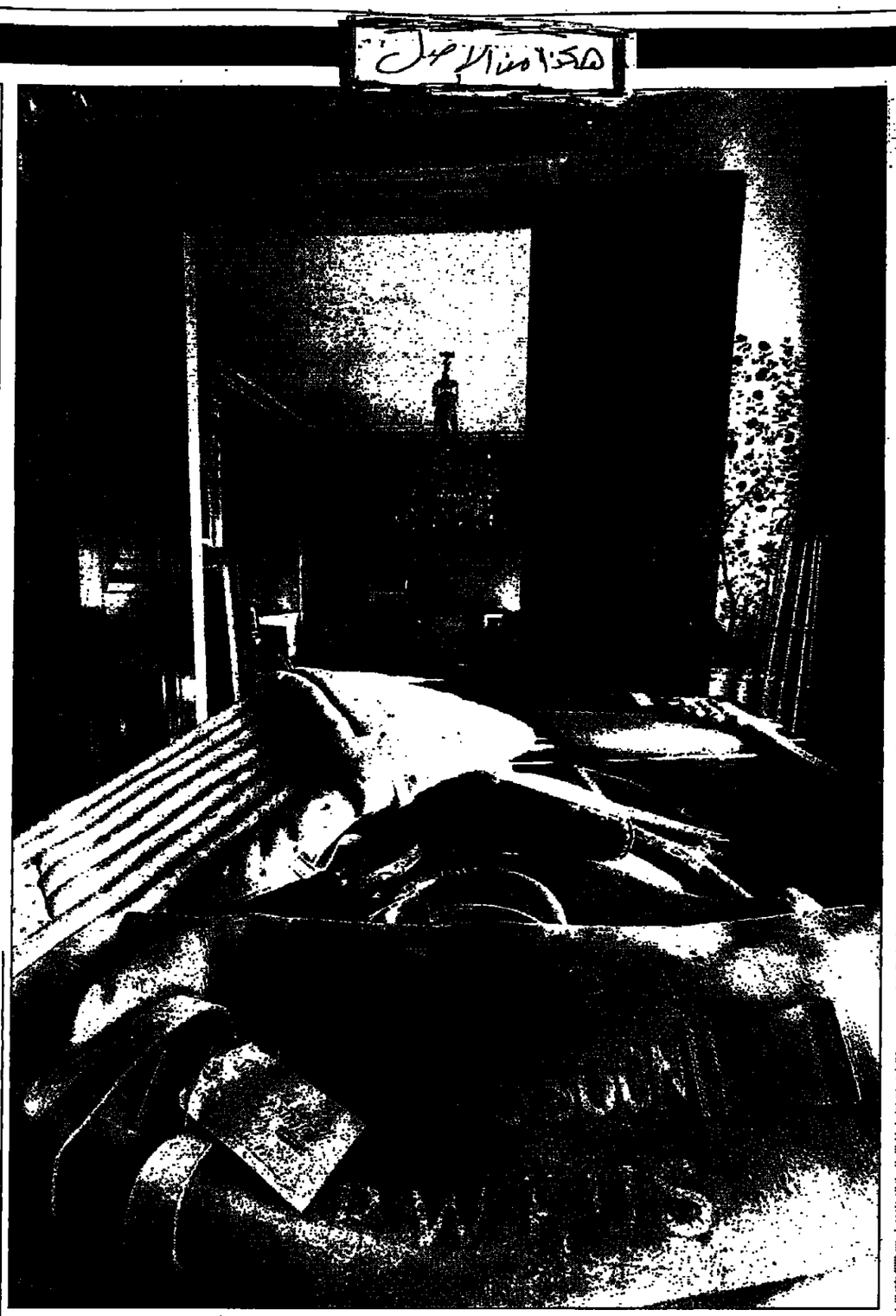


Poetic justice 80 years on





Sassoon and the fight for sanity on home front



Siegfried Sassoon, pictured (top left) during his wartime days and six years before his death. His mementoes were sold off in 1994 by his son, George

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK MARTIN

John Ezard

THE extent of high-level official panic over the activities of the idealistic, disillusioned first world war poet and army officer Siegfried Sassoon was disclosed yesterday.

More than 80 years after his unheeded warnings and laments, his official army papers show how keenly British intelligence tried to amass evidence which could be used to discredit and possibly destroy him.

Surveillance included apparently contradictory moves to emphasise the insanity of his calls for an end to the war and to explore whether he had issued some of these at a time when he would have been open to a court martial.

William Spencer, the Public Record Office's specialist adviser on military history, said the papers proved that a court martial was being considered. "If Sassoon was going to be court-martialled it could have been for bringing the army into disrepute or conduct unbecoming an officer," he said.

Sassoon, who died in 1967, was a highly respected poet who had won the Military Cross during the war. He is best known now for befriending and encouraging Wilfred Owen and for fostering some of Owen's greatest poems.

His file is marked "not to be destroyed as it refers to a person of international importance". The papers include what is thought to be the original text of Sassoon's peace manifesto — sent to War Office intelligence by a member of the public who found it on the luggage rack of a train between Birmingham and Preston.

Another version of the manifesto had already been read to Parliament. But what alarmed intelligence services about its appearance on the railways was the fear that Sassoon had given it to pacifist groups who were using it to stir public discontent in the last year of the war.

Equal alarm was generated by a three-verse poem which the writer published in the leftish magazine The Nation — a forerunner of the New Statesman — in July, 1918. The poem, I Stood With the Dead, is about the grief loved ones would feel is they could see bodies on the battlefield.

The deputy director of military intelligence, brigadier-general George Cockerill, wrote a private letter to the Nation: "If Lieutenant Sassoon is now writing verse such as appeared ... it would appear that his mind is still in chaos and that he is not fit to be trusted with men's lives."

Pointedly, Cockerill also asked the magazine — "solely in the public interest" — exactly when Sassoon had sent it the poem. This is seen as an attempt to discover whether he was covered at the time by an army medical board finding of mental instability, or whether he was open to court martial.

The Nation's editor, Hugh Massingham, replied briefly that he had no clue when he had received the poem.

The newly discovered peace manifesto draft is now the only surviving record outside Hansard, which the novelist Pat Barker used for her Regeneration trilogy.

Dated July 1917, it says the poet is "making this statement as an act of wilful defiance of military authority because I believe the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it.

"I am a soldier convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that the war upon which I entered as an act of defence and liberation has now become a war of aggression and conquest.

"I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust.

"I am not protesting against the conduct of the war but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed. On behalf of those who are suffering now, I make this protest against the deception which is being practised on them".

The copy was sent by a Birmingham train passenger to Lord Derby, minister for army recruitment. The War Office annotation says: "Lieutenant Sassoon was undoubtedly the author but, when it was written, he was a lunatic. It seems possible that some pacifists are circulating Sassoon's insane efforts".

However, no further copies were passed on by civilians to the authorities. This undermined the intelligence staff's conspiracy theory. In the summer of 1917 Sassoon had travelled by train to the medical board hearing which ruled that he was "suffering from a medical breakdown" and "not responsible for his actions".

This leads William Spencer to suspect that Sassoon had simply left his copy of the manifesto on the train. It was discovered on January 20, 1918, five months after Sassoon passed through the area, in what may the most officially traumatic episode of absent-mindedness in literary history.

A life

□ **1886:** Born near Paddock Wood, Kent. Brought up as country gentleman.

□ **1906-1912:** First poetry published privately. Friend says: "He was always waiting for the spark from heaven to fall — and when it fell it was shrapnel."

□ **1915:** Volunteers for war. Nicknamed 'Mad Jack' for bravery. Wins MC.

□ **1917:** Wounded. Begins attacking war. Befriends Wilfred Owen. Declared mentally unstable.

□ **1918:** Re-embarks on peacetime life as war poet. Writes Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man.

□ **1967:** Dies in Wiltshire.

I stood with the dead

I stood with the Dead, so forsaken and still:
When dawn was grey I stood with the Dead.
And my slow heart said, 'You must kill, you must kill:
'Soldier, soldier, morning is red'.

On the shapes of the slain in their crumpled disgrace
I stared for a while through the thin cold rain ...
'O lad that I loved, there is rain on your face,
'And your eyes are blurred and sick like the plain.'

I stood with the Dead ... They were dead; they were dead;
My heart and my head beat a march of dismay:
And gusts of the wind came dulled by the guns.
'Fall in!' I shouted; 'Fall in for your pay!'

Kipling: search for a lost son



ON 3 JULY, 1915 Rudyard Kipling — the most acclaimed British and Imperial poet of the early 20th century — published a book to help the war effort.

Entitled Songs of the English, a joint venture with the Daily Telegraph newspaper, it was an appeal for bandsmen to be used to instill comradeship into troops through patriotic songs.

Barely two months later his only son, John, aged 20, was reported missing at the battle of Loos; and all the music, and hope went out of Kipling's song.

Army records newly released by the Public Record Office show how in the depths of misery he refused to accept his son's death. This was despite eyewitness reports — classified as "unofficial" by the War Office — by soldiers who had seen him first hobbling with a leg wound, then lying dead in a trench so shell-blasted that it was understandable his body had not been found.

Nevertheless, more than a year after his son's disappearance Kipling wrote begging the authorities not to list him officially as dead.

He told the War Office: "He was wounded and left behind at Petit '14 (a building on the battlefield) on September 27, 1915.

"I have interviewed a great many people and have heard from many others and can find none who saw him killed and his wound, being a leg wound, would have been more disabling than fatal."

Treating the author exceptionally gently, the War Office wrote: "The army council does not desire to proceed with the official acceptance of death in opposition to the wishes of next of kin."

It agreed to keep John on the missing list. Not until after the war, in 1919 was he posted as dead "through the lapse of time", as a letter to his father explained.

Kipling's solicitors replied that he accepted his son was dead after a long but unsuccessful attempt to trace him in Germany.

Kipling tried to perpetuate him by writing the official history of his regiment, The Irish Guards in the Great War. But, according to one of his contemporaries, the author was subsequently passed over for the Poet Laureateship because he was drinking to mask his despair. He died in 1936, aged 71.

The 80-year mystery was solved only in the early 1990s when the Ministry of Defence announced that it was satisfied it had identified and reburied John Kipling's remains. Until then he was one of innumerable first world war soldiers with an unknown grave.

Lawrence: facts and fiction



THIS [illegible] Lawrence of Arabia [illegible] the hero of [illegible] Seven Pillars of Wisdom [illegible] Victoria Cross [illegible] the listed honour for the armed services [illegible] yesterday with those of nearly 217,000 [illegible] Lawrence [illegible] Lawrence's death in a motorcycle [illegible] Lawrence serving in the army [illegible] the handwritten note which [illegible] Decoration many believed [illegible] it was from General Pagets [illegible] Commissioner Colin Watling in July [illegible] to a request from London for information [illegible] service record [illegible] This officer is down for a DSO (Distinguished Service Order) in the name of Lawrence of Arabia [illegible] Victoria Cross. Doreen Mellor said that he is [illegible] of the latter honour [illegible]

After 13 years on death row, time runs out for female killer



Karla Faye Tucker: double killer faces execution tonight

Joanna Coles in Huntsville, Texas

BARRING an unlikely last-minute stay from the White House, Karla Faye Tucker, the double murderer who has spent 13 years on death row, will make grim history tonight as the first woman to be executed in Texas since the Civil War.

Yesterday the state board of pardons and paroles unanimously rejected her application for clemency, arguing it could not make an exception because she was a woman.

Tucker, aged 38, has lodged an appeal with the supreme court, but it is not expected to succeed. The execution, by lethal injection, is scheduled to take place tonight at 6pm local time (midnight GMT). Tucker, who became a practising Christian six months after her arrest in 1983, will be only the second woman to be executed in the United States since the death penalty was reintroduced in 1976.

Tucker's case has gripped the country, earning her support from unlikely corners and refocusing the debate on the death penalty in Texas.

The state is known as the US execution capital: 37 men on death row died last year, more than a third of the country's total. The state has six more women on death row.

Among those supporting Tucker's appeal is Pat Robertson, the rightwing television evangelist more commonly known for espousing capital punishment. The Pope has asked the Texas governor, George Bush, to consider a stay.

Yesterday Mr Bush, son of the former president, who has not commuted a death sentence since he was elected three years ago, said gender was irrelevant. He was concerned with only two things: was she guilty and had she had adequate redress to the courts.

Tucker has said she is not afraid to die but feels she has more work to do deterring young people from crime.

"It's all up to Him," she has said, referring to God. "He'll touch whoever He needs to if He wants to stop it. I leave it in God's hands."

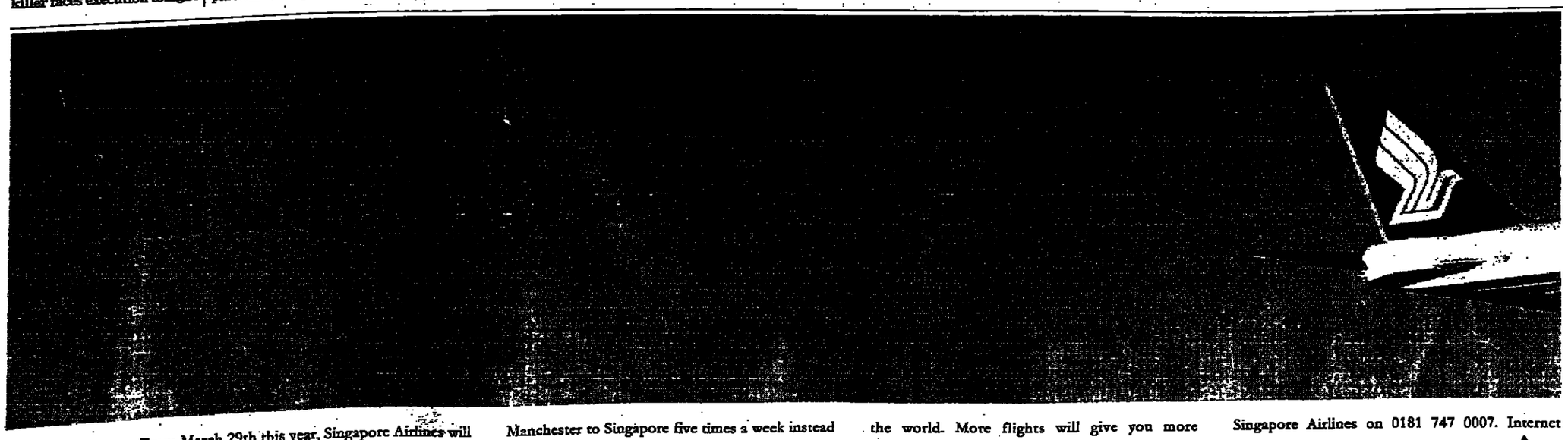
Still hoping for a last-minute intervention from the supreme court, Tucker's lawyer, David Botsford, said there was no question she had changed. "She is clearly not the same person," he said yesterday. "Her death will not serve any purpose other than pure capital vengeance."

Tucker was found guilty of murdering Jerry Lynn Dean and Deborah Thornton with a pickaxe in 1983. High on drugs, which she had taken since her mother introduced her to marijuana at the age of eight, she told the court she had an orgasm every time she swung the axe.

Between her arrest and the trial, the drug-addicted prostitute discovered Christianity, gave up drugs, underwent a personality change and married the prison chaplain.

Dean's sister, Peggy Kurtz, and Thornton's brother, Ronald Carlson, say they believe her transformation and support her appeal.

G2, Front





From March 29th this year, Singapore Airlines will fly three times a day, instead of twice, direct from London to Singapore every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. In addition, we will also fly direct from Manchester to Singapore five times a week instead of four. The result will be that Singapore Airlines makes more direct flights a week from London and Manchester to Singapore than anyone else in the world. More flights will give you more choice as to when you fly and what connections you can then take from Singapore. For more information contact your local travel agent or call Singapore Airlines on 0181 747 0007. Internet address http://www.singaporeair.com

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Patient claims culture persists at Ashworth, where nurses were made 'security guards' to crack down on gangs and pornography

Drugs 'rife' at top security hospital

David Ward

DRUGS brought in by visitors still circulate on the wards of a top security hospital at the centre of an investigation into drug abuse and pornography, a patient claimed yesterday.

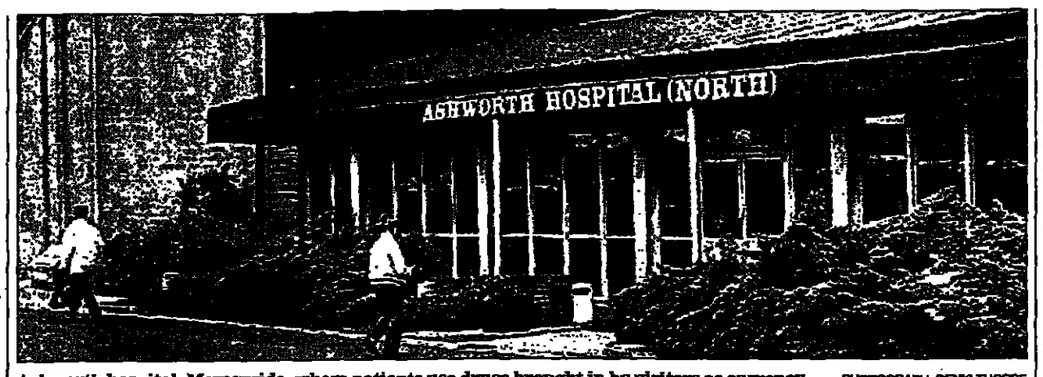
Patient B, a resident for 10 years, was one of the first to give evidence when the judicial inquiry into the running of Ashworth hospital on Merseyside moved from London to take evidence in a recreation hall inside the hospital.

He described a gang and drug culture which had existed until a clampdown two years ago. He welcomed the change, but complained that nurses had now been turned into security guards.

"Drugs are used as currency in here because we are not allowed money," he said. "I think it will be an ever-present problem. I don't think you will ever get rid of it ... You cannot stop people having visitors and wanting drugs. Where there's a will, there's a way."

The inquiry, which began taking evidence last November, was set up by the former health secretary, Stephen Dorrell, following allegations of drug misuse, paedophile activity and the availability of pornography in the personality disorder unit (PDU). A former patient also claimed that an eight-year-old girl was smuggled into the hospital on several occasions.

"I don't use drugs but I would say there are fewer drugs in the hospital now," continued Patient B, aged 38. "The emphasis put on pornography in the security system has absolutely eradicated it. If the same emphasis was put on drugs, I don't know if that would eradicate drugs."



Ashworth hospital, Merseyside, where patients use drugs brought in by visitors as currency PHOTOGRAPH: DENIS THORPE

Pornography, he added, was a "past-tense problem".

Before the security crackdown, he had tried to keep clear of "politics and skulduggery" among the 476 patients. He added: "But the situation became untenable because people were having to take sides, join gangs for security. I didn't want to join. It was mental intimidation rather than physical ... If you didn't join a gang you felt very isolated."

He told the tribunal, chaired by retired judge Peter Fallon QC, that he had asked to be moved to another ward. When nothing was done, he smashed up a television and doctors had then recognised his distress.

Asked if gangs still existed, he said the gang culture was nothing like it had been but there was still a hierarchy among patients on every ward. "On some, it's the biggest [patients], the most formidable. On others, the most intelligent, the most cunning. On others, it's how affluent they are and how many friends they have."

Of drugs he added: "I'm aware of groups of lads in the hospital who will get together to smoke a bit of dope. But they are not there to intimidate anyone, but there as a group that enjoys smoking dope."

He said he had come into the hospital as "Mr Average" and had learned to survive by using manipulative behaviour. "It's like a village in here with walls. Everything that happens, everyone knows about."

He also described how two psychologists responsible for an anger management course at the hospital had had a fight in the car park.

He feared that the new tough line on security meant nurses had to take their turn in keeping a 24-hour watch on corridors.

"It means a staff nurse has to spend an hour sitting on a corridor like a night watchman at a factory," he said. "He is not doing therapy, not interacting with his patients. Patient care is now secondary. It's a waste to put people of that calibre on night watchman duty."

Commentator attacks South African hero

Walden dismisses 'feckless' Mandela

Ruaridh Nicoll

EVEN the greatest find their lives re-evaluated, and tonight it is the turn of the most untouchable of them all, Nelson Mandela.

Brian Walden, much lauded commentator and former Labour MP, attacks Mandela as ineffectual, arrogant, feckless and autocratic during a monologue about the South African president on BBC2.

"Nelson Mandela, perhaps the most generally admired figure of our age, falls short of the giants of the past," he says in his series, Walden on Heroes.

"It is indeed a heroic virtue to forgive one's enemies. Abraham Lincoln shared that with Nelson Mandela, but he combined it with a ruthless determination to make sure that his nation didn't lapse into folly, which is something Mandela hasn't been able to match."

While MPs expressed fury at the comments — "Brian Walden has lost his marbles," said Ann Clwyd, MP for Cynon Valley — many South Africans thought Mr Walden had no grasp of the depths in Mandela's character.

"To say Mandela's greatest gift is forgiveness is an extremely facile view," said Phillip van Niekerk, editor of South Africa's Mail & Guardian newspaper.

"Mandela's greatest achievement was as an astute politician. He does have great failings but as a politician I think he has to be compared to the giants of the past."


Brian Walden: TV pundit who has 'lost his marbles'

During the half-hour broadcast, the last of the series, Mr Walden charts Mandela's rise through South Africa's troubled times and concludes that it was marred by incompetent decisions.

He claims the freedom fighter's move to violence can be traced to his affair then marriage to Winnie. "Mandela's plunge into violence shows him at his worst," he says, not because it was unjustified but because he "approached the whole thing with unbelieveable amateurism and fecklessness".

The earlier signing of the Freedom Charter, the linchpin of the ANC non-raclialist philosophy, was, according to Walden, an act of naivety.

"He was very lucky to escape hanging," says Mr Walden. "What Mandela had done was to destroy black nationalism for over a decade, and he'd entrenched the National Party in power."

The commentator continues that international opinion, sanctions or black nationalism had little to do with the end of apartheid.

"Apartheid collapsed because of the dominant force of our age: business. It's ironic that the National Party, whose purpose was to produce greater Afrikaner prosperity, by doing so ruined itself."

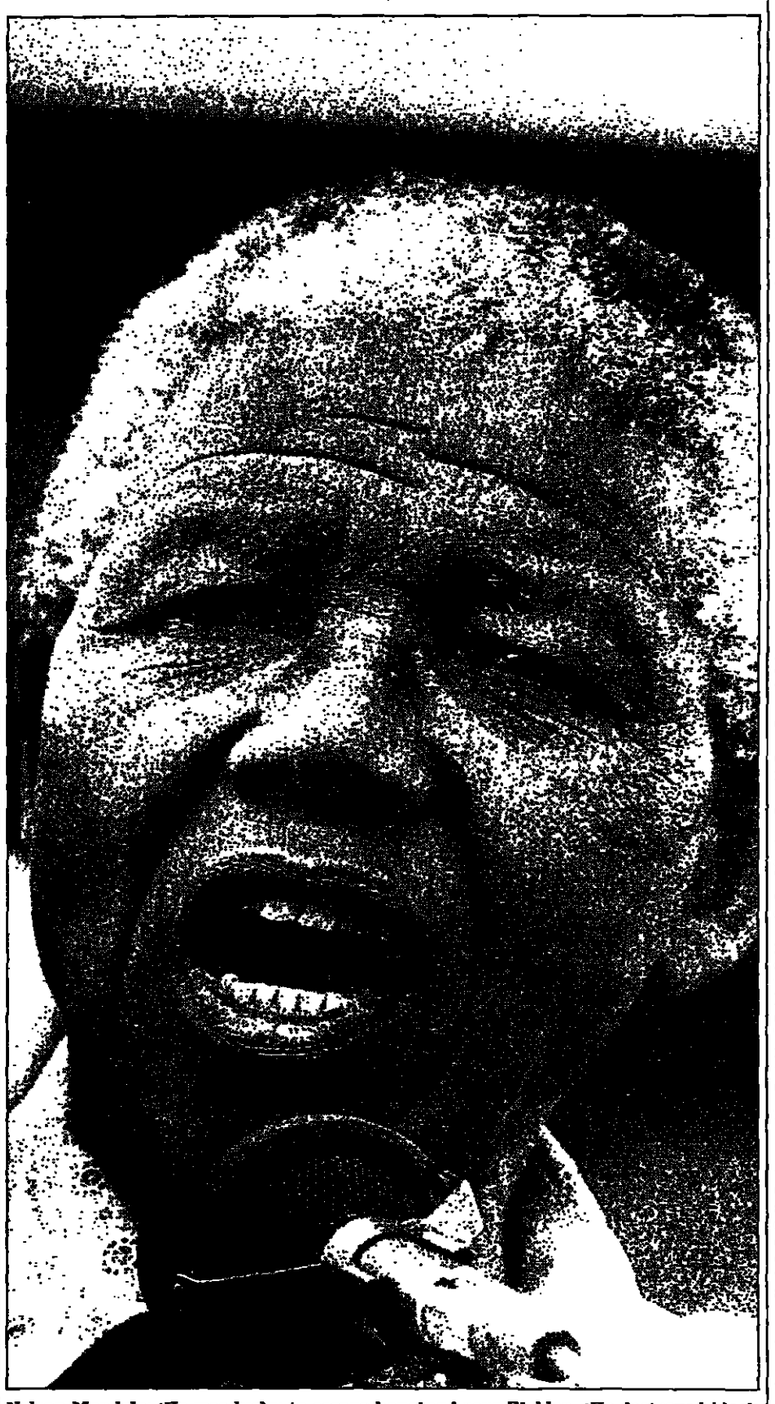
Mr Walden also says that the way South Africa's future president negotiated his freedom from prison and the unbanning of the ANC was "high-handed" and "typical of Mandela".

Once he was released, Walden says the violence that flared between the ANC and Inkatha was partly Mandela's fault: "Mandela handled this very badly indeed. He didn't see Buthelezi often enough to reassure him, nor was he persuaded that Buthelezi had any real influence with the Zulus."

Mr Van Niekerk believes that Mr Walden has considered only the surface of the events. "I think that at the time [of his negotiations with the National Party] he quite masterfully understood the dynamics of the situation," he said. "To have achieved what he did makes that his moment of genius, his finest moment."

A number of MPs say they intend to table motions in the Commons, rejecting Walden's attack. "This is a disgraceful and demeaning attack on one of the great figures of politics of the 20th century," said Barry Sheerman, Labour MP for Huddersfield.

Mandela himself is unlikely to be ruffled by the criticism. "It sounds quite superficial," said Joel Netshitenzhe, one of the president's advisers. "The best testament to Nelson Mandela's place in history, especially of bringing people together, is the appreciation felt towards him in South Africa, across the African continent, and around the world."


Nelson Mandela: 'He was lucky to escape hanging,' says Walden. 'He destroyed black nationalism for a decade and entrenched National Party in power' PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

Police to spy on bars and clubs in effort to stop drink-drivers

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

INCREASED police powers to stake out premises and breathalyse a member of the public without prior suspicion are included in plans to reform the drink-driving laws, published by the Government yesterday.

The police would be able to keep watch on licensed premises where they thought there was excessive drinking. They would be allowed to maintain a surveillance for up to 48 hours if they thought considerable bouts of drinking were involved.

The Transport Minister, Gavin Strang, yesterday asked the public for comments on a range of ideas over the next three months as the Government moves towards tightening the drink-driving laws, probably by the end of the year. Legislation is expected in the next parliamentary session.

Police are already empowered to stop and search people under the Knives Act, if they think they could be in possession of a dangerous weapon. The Government believes it could move in this direction on drink-driving cases.

Dr Strang said the Government was attracted to the idea of effectively limiting drivers to one drink with a lower level penalty system of 50mg of alcohol per 100mls of blood. This would be subject to a fine instead of a ban. Drivers with more than 80mg — the driving limit — would be subject to the usual disqualification and fine or imprisonment.

The Government's consultation document suggests two different forms of do-it-yourself tests. One would be a compulsory ignition interlock device which would prevent a car from starting if the driver was found to be over the limit after blowing into a dashboard mounted nozzle.

The second would involve the use of cheap disposable DIY breath tests, available from shops or pubs. They would be used on a voluntary basis by motorists to check whether they were legally able to drive the morning after a drinking session or on their way home.

Dr Strang said the Government would look at "ignition interlock devices" which stop cars from starting unless the driver provides an alcohol-free breath sample. These devices have already been used in the United States, but are expensive.

The drink-driving curbs could hit rural pubs, where public transport is limited, but Dr Strang insisted that under any new legislation, somebody going out for a night could survive on two pints of ginger beer shandy and soft drinks.

He added: "I could still have a good night out on that."

Save our Country Pubs, an organisation representing a number of small breweries, reported: "A new curb on drink-driving would sound the death knell for many of us.

> Somebody going out could survive on two pints of ginger beer shandy

"A third of us would be forced to close within two years."

But Dr Strang's announcement received general support from the police and safety groups.

The Association of Chief Police Officers, the British Medical Association, and the Automobile Association, backed a lowering of the limit. "There is massive public support for bringing down the limit," said the AA. "But what is really needed is more breath testing powers for the police so that they can target persistent drink-drivers who ignore the present limit."

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents said: "We believe that in two to three years the limit should be lowered further. We want to see a 'none for the road' by the year 2000."

Leader Comment, page 8

What's the best thing you can get out of a dead end job?

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139 MPs oppose Blair stand against ageism law

Seumas Milne
Labour Editor

AGE discrimination will not be outlawed despite a survey finding that 18 million people claim to have suffered it, and four out of five workers over 50 believe they have been turned down for a job because of their age.

The Government will instead try to persuade employers to hire older workers, only resorting to legislation if a voluntary code of practice fails.

By last night 139 MPs — 109 of them Labour — had signed a parliamentary motion supporting a private member's bill to outlaw age discrimination in job adverts. The bill is due to have its second reading on Friday.

Both the TUC and the charity Age Concern, which yesterday launched an Age Discrimination Week, expressed disappointment that the Government will not back the measure — although employment minister Andrew Smith said he was glad the bill would raise the issue's profile.

The Gallup survey published yesterday by Age Concern found 70 per cent of people believe age discrimination exists, while the Employers' Forum on Age found 80 per cent of workers over 50 believe they had been turned down for a job because they were too old.

Although discrimination is found across the age range, most complaints by far are from over-45s. Sometimes they feel it is direct, sometimes the result of cost, skill or institutional factors.

Mervyn Mugford, for example, is a 48-year-old science teacher with more than 20 years' experience. In 1995, he was made redundant from his Devon school in a cuts programme. Although science teachers are in short supply, Mr Mugford has now made more than 150 job applications in vain, and believes schools are more likely to opt for a newly-qualified teacher on £14,000-£15,000 a year, rather than someone of his experience, on £22,000. "It seems half the working population is being written off after a certain age," he said.

Legislation to outlaw age discrimination was one of Labour's promises — made by both employment spokespeople, Harriet Harman and Ian McCartney, in 1995. But it fell victim to the "bonfire of commitments" ordered by Tony Blair in the summer before the general election. Hence Labour's manifesto promised "action" rather than legislation.

Mr Smith said he was not "ruling out legislation as a possibility for the future", but it risked adding to "burdens on business" and leading the Government into a legal minefield.

Instead, he promised to consult trades unions, employers and agencies like Age Concern about a code that would "work with business and encourage best practice". There was, he said, an "enormous reservoir of experience, skill, talent and maturity among older people", and it was "crazy as well as unfair to consign them to the scrapheap".


Kay Godly, 50, whose job club told her and others to leave age off CV, as it might not be 'helpful' PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

'People should have a chance to show what they can do'

AFTER her local dole office sent 50-year-old Kay Godly to Hendon Job Club in October, she was warned not to put her age on her CV when applying for jobs. It might not be "helpful", she and others were told, writes Seumas Milne.

But employers are not so easily fooled. One of the many to reject an application of hers for secretarial work — with her impressive CV and record of 20 years' office experience — was Eric Morley, chairman of the Miss World organisation.

After thanking her for her letter, he continued: "One important item you have left out of your CV is your date of birth," signing off without another word.

"It really stung me," Ms Godly said. "I knew age discrimination existed, but getting first-hand experience of it was another matter. It was uncalled for and very unfair."

A single parent with three grown-up children, Ms Godly said she had been warned about the "age thing" when she took redundancy from the public services union Unison in 1995, after 10 years as a secretary at its Golders Green office in north London.

She had felt it was "time to move on," but soon found her IT skills were out of date. So she did what the Government encourages and upgraded her skills — achieving NVQ Level 2 in Business Studies at a local college, and learning various word-processing packages.

However, in the last three months she has applied for 34 jobs, and had five unsuccessful interviews. "I'm not having much luck," she said.

Age appears to be part of the problem. "People should be given a chance," she said, "rather than getting the door shut in your face before you can show what you can do." She believes legislation would help — but firms might find ways round it. "They don't have to employ you, do they?"

Verdict opens Pandora's box

Glimpse of murky backdrop to lottery glitz

Kamal Ahmed on the implications of the Panorama interview libel hearing

HE TWIDDLED his thumbs. He stared at the floor. With his wife on one side and his secretary on the other, he saw his business career crumble before him.

Guy Snowden tried to bribe Richard Branson. Seven words which signify the greatest crisis Britain's national lottery has faced. Millions of pounds and some big reputations are at stake and the spotlights are set to rove after other targets.

At 4.30pm yesterday, the jury had deliberated for just two hours. Asked if they found for Branson or Snowden, the foreman answered in a clear voice: "Mr Branson". With one punch, Mr Snowden was out.

There was a flicker of a smile on Mr Branson's face, with a cheer saved for outside the courtroom.

Already, the questions are piling up. Mr Snowden was the head of the company, G-Tech, which owns a 22.5 per cent stake in Camelot, national lottery organisers. He has already resigned — but what of G-Tech which is still in a position to take a share of Camelot's £70 million a year profits?

Peter Davis, director general of Oflot, the government body charged with policing the lottery, had said that after exhaustive inquiries G-Tech and Mr Snowden were deemed fit and proper to have a stake in the lottery. But is his position still secure?

The process for bidding to win the next seven-year licence to run the lottery, beginning in 2001, starts in earnest this year. Will Camelot be allowed to enter the battle?

A difficult question. A light has been shone on the world behind the facade of "It Could Be You".

Only one man is smiling — that big, toothy smile associated with everything from condoms to hot air balloons. British Airways tried and failed to land a punch. G-Tech tried and failed to land a punch. Richard Branson was telling the astonishing truth all along.

The kernel of this lottery disaster starts just about as far from the world of back street dealing as it is possible to be. The graceful curve of Holland Park in west London stretches away from the rather racier streets of Notting Hill and towards the more genteel, and eminently richer, surroundings of Kensington.

In one of the beautiful Georgian houses lives Richard Branson: British, son of a barrister, public school educated, billionaire.

On a warm autumn day in September 1993 he was expecting a lunch guest, Guy Snowden; American, son of a bulldozer driver, forestry college educated, millionaire.

The two men had spoken on the telephone briefly a few days earlier, discussing their prospective attitudes towards the lottery, which both were bidding to run.

At 1pm Mr Snowden was ushered into the drawing room in the house which also serves as Mr Branson's office. He waited for a few minutes before being introduced to Mr Branson and to John Jackson, the former chief executive of Body Shop who was helping Mr Branson to put together his lottery bid.

Lunch was in the conservatory. As the three men sat among the carefully tended plants, the talk wandered over the issues — Mr Branson arguing that all lottery profits should go to charity, Mr Snowden countering that such an important business should be left to the companies with the greatest expertise.

Those companies, he explained, had shareholders who were motivated by one thing — profits.

Both men asked if the other might be willing to join their respective bids. No, was the short answer.

And that, but for the 90-second conversation that followed, might have been the end of it. As Mr Snowden battled with his chocolate mousse, he decided to go for broke.

"I don't know how to phrase this, Richard," he said. "There is always a bottom line. I'll get to the point. In what way can we help you, Richard?"

Mr Snowden was sweating and dabbing his forehead with a handkerchief. There was a pause, maybe his message was not getting through.

"I mean, what can we do for you personally?"

"What on earth do you mean?" Mr Branson said.

"Everybody needs something," came the reply.

And that was it. Guy Snowden had tried to bribe Richard Branson to withdraw from the bidding to run the lottery. Mr Jackson admitted that he nearly fell off his chair.

Fast-forward two years and three months. December 1995 and Mr Snowden is sitting with some of his closest advisers in his offices watching Panorama. There was Mr Branson explaining to the world just what had happened during that lunch. They tried to bribe me, he said.

G-Tech's publicity machine went into overdrive. David Rendine, the company's director of public relations, told anybody that was willing to listen that the allegations were "outrageous" and "completely untrue". Why on earth would Mr Snowden try to bribe Mr Branson, he argued. He posed no threat to the G-Tech-led bid, and Mr Snowden had absolutely no reason to offer him money, he argued. And no, Mr Snowden had never heard of the bribery allegations.

Mr Branson's reponse was simple enough: If I'm wrong, sue me. If you're calling me a liar, I'll sue you.

Mr Snowden had to take the bait or risk seeing his reputation disappear as fast as spring snow. So both men took action, a court fight of Goliath v. Goliath.

Mr Snowden had two problems. First, Mr Branson had written a note of the conversation in a notepad on the day of the lunch. Second, a number of memos revealed just how seriously Camelot was taking the Branson bid.

The first memo arrived on Mr Snowden's desk on March 2, 1994, six months after the lunch. Tim Holley, chief executive of Camelot, and David Rigg, director of communications, also received a copy.

It was from Charles Cousins, an employee of G-Tech who made up part of the bid team. It referred to a meeting between Mr Cousins and Colin Moynihan, the former Conservative MP who was hired as a £60,000-a-year consultant by G-Tech to oil the wheels of access between the company, the Government and Peter Davis. Another former Conservative MP, John Maples, was similarly employed.

"Colin Moynihan believes that HMG [Her Majesty's Government] will not support the Branson bid, though he agrees that we must find an elegant way to get the Director General off the political hook," the memo said.

The inference was clear. Although the Government did not want to see Mr Branson win, Camelot was worried that it would be difficult for Mr Davis to explain to the public why the Branson bid, with all the profits going to charity, had failed.

Another memo between Mr Rigg and Mr Holley discussed rumours of a bribery allegation involving G-Tech and Mr Branson. A third, again from Mr Rigg, detailed Mr Branson's bid and how Camelot should respond to the charity v profit debate.

Odd, it seemed, for a company that had "no fear" of what the man from Virgin was doing.

Immediately after Camelot won the bidding process, Sir Ron Dearing, the then chairman of the company, had a meeting with Mr Davis at which the Oflot director admitted that he had "real concerns" about G-Tech. Odd, it was suggested in court, for a company that was supposedly fit and proper to participate in running Camelot.

Now Camelot, Mr Davis and the Government have been left to sift over the ashes of this now most public of business dirty dealings.

Mr Snowden has already lost. Others may follow.

● CORRECTION: We have been asked to make it clear that contrary to our report on Page 9, January 26, Mr Guy Snowden receives no salary from his non-executive directorship of Camelot.

'There is always a bottom line. In what way can we help you, Richard?'

'We must find a way to get the Director General off the hook'



Guy Snowden, with his wife Diane, faces the media outside the High Court after losing his libel case against Richard Branson PHOTOGRAPH: NEIL MUNNS

Snowden: Saw gap in the market

IN the 1970s, Guy Snowden set up a consultancy firm with a friend, Victor Markowicz, to advise state lotteries on how best to run their businesses.

It quickly became apparent to Snowden that there was no single company in the business of actually running lotteries. So he set one up and called it G-Tech.

After winning the bid to run the state lottery in Rhode Island and Connecticut, the company went from strength to strength and now runs more than 70 lotteries around the world.

It makes more than £500 million a year and has 3,200 employees. Snowden, aged 52, has seen his salary, bonuses and share options rise from the equivalent of £1.2 million in 1993 to £3 million last year. The company also has a share of Camelot's £70 million-plus annual profits.

There have been rumblings of discontent. Allegations of bid-rigging and dirty tricks have dogged the company during a number of bitter battles to run new lotteries.

Four FBI investigations have looked at claims that bribes were offered to officials in California, Kentucky and New Jersey.

None has ever gone high enough to implicate Snowden.

Kamal Ahmed

Davis: 'Errors of judgment'

PETER Davis, 56, rose from being auditor at accountants Price Waterhouse to deputy chairman of the Abbey National building society.

He was appointed National Lottery regulator because he was regarded as a safe pair of hands. He soon found himself subject to tough questioning from the National Audit Office and the Commons public accounts committee.

They became unimpressed with his role as regulator. He was accused of being "unwise" and making "serious errors of judgment" in his relationship with G-Tech after he accepted seven free flights on its jets and helicopters while in the US.

They also disapproved of him staying with Carl Menges, head of a New York investment house with a 25 per cent stake in G-Tech. The two men's wives were friends.

After Branson made his allegations, an inquiry commissioned by Davis cleared Snowden of any suggestion that he was involved and gave evidence on Snowden's behalf in the libel case.

He survived pressure to resign in 1996 but Virginia Bottomley, then heritage secretary, warned him to be more careful about accepting trips.

David Hencke

Wounded soldier sues MoD

Clare Dyer on the compensation battle by a UN peacekeeper who lost a leg serving in Bosnia

A BRITISH soldier who lost a leg after a Serbian tank fired into his barracks will today launch a High Court challenge to the Ministry of Defence's refusal to pay him compensation.

In May 1995, Sgt Trevor Walker, then a corporal, had been in Bosnia 19 days when the shell hit his accommodation block. He was with a unit of Royal Engineers assigned to help United Nations peacekeeping forces build a road for use by humanitarian vehicles.

If his challenge succeeds, it could force the services to pay compensation for death or injury in a much wider range of cases than at present. The ministry's Criminal Injuries Compensation Overseas Scheme will compensate soldiers injured through crimes of violence abroad, but not when involved in "war or warlike activities".

When Sgt Walker applied for compensation under the scheme, his commanding officer referred to him as "a soldier of almost unlimited potential to achieve high rank and a full career ... He has borne his pain with enormous fortitude and has been an example to us all."

But he was told that the scheme excluded injuries "as a result of war operations or military activity by warring factions". The MoD is refusing to pay even though the UN has confirmed it would reimburse Britain for any sums paid out for injuries on UN peacekeeping service.

Sgt Walker, aged 32, had 13 operations but his right leg had to be amputated above the knee. He also had serious injuries to his left leg. He now wears an artificial limb and works as a storeman at the Royal School of Military Engineering near Gillingham, Kent, where he lives with his wife, Debbie, and two children.

"It's drastically affected my life," he said. "Frustration is a big part of it, not being able to do what I could. And there's uncertainty about the future. My promotion prospects have been hampered. The army have said I can finish my 22 years — I've served 14 — but I don't know if my injuries will allow me to. Job prospects after the army are much more limited."

The British Legion is financing his case because his army pay puts him outside the scope of legal aid. Some 26 British service personnel have been killed in Bosnia, and about 80 seriously injured.

Sgt Walker's lawyers will argue that when the scheme was set up in 1980, explanatory material showed that the war exception was meant to exclude only injuries resulting from acts "committed by an enemy where a state of war or a warlike situation is declared to exist".

They say this clearly was intended to cover situations where soldiers were engaged in fighting an enemy of Britain, and not in peacekeeping. But service personnel were never told that the MoD was now adopting a broader interpretation, covering any state of war, and that they would not be compensated if they were injured in peacekeeping duties.

Soldiers serving in Northern Ireland are considered to be assisting the Royal Ulster Constabulary in fighting terrorism, and not engaged in war. Therefore any injuries they suffer are considered to result from criminal acts, allowing them to claim under the same criminal injuries compensation scheme which applies to civilians.

Sgt Walker said he had been told his injury would have been worth up to £150,000 under the criminal injuries scheme.

His lawyers will argue that the deliberate attack on a UN peacekeeping unit was not a military activity, but a crime under international law.

An MoD spokesman said Sgt Walker's case was "extremely sad". He added: "As far as compensation is concerned, soldiers are very much aware there is a difference between getting injured in Northern Ireland and getting injured elsewhere."

'Bankrupt' orchestra faces closure, accountants warn

Dan Glaister
Arts Correspondent

MANCHESTER'S 140-year-old Hallé Orchestra is effectively bankrupt and faces closure unless financial controls are put in place and a rescue package can be put together, its board will be told tomorrow.

The orchestra, which operates under the name the Hallé Concert Society, has an accumulated deficit of £600,000 and a trading loss this year of £500,000.

Its accountants, KPMG, concludes that a "well run" orchestra should lose only £200,000 and that the Hallé has reached its overdraft limit.

The downturn in the orchestra's finances comes despite a leap of a third in audience figures following its move to the £42 million Bridgewater Hall at the end of 1996.

The Hallé chairman, John East, said yesterday: "I have made no secret of the fact that the Hallé has financial problems. Can you tell me of any other major arts organisation in the country that is not strapped for money?"

The entire orchestra sector is facing financial problems, with orchestras in Birmingham, London, Liverpool and Bournemouth all under unprecedented financial pressure. Some observers argue that there are simply too many orchestras, and the Hallé is thought to have fared badly in competition with the Manchester-based BBC Symphony Orchestra.

In a familiar refrain for arts organisations, the Hallé's problems are blamed on poor management and financial control. Insiders have blamed the orchestra's "archaic" structure and KPMG is understood to have condemned the management's "general lack of control" and failure to develop a strategy on which to base decisions.

Personality differences have also played a role. The chief executive, Alan Dean, left the Hallé last summer claiming he was frustrated at not being able to balance the books and has not been replaced although an appointment is expected in the next few days.

Until new financial controls are put in place, it is unlikely that any of the Hallé's current funders — including the Arts Council, Manchester city council and surrounding local authorities — will be prepared to put more money into the orchestra. Options which may be considered include a loan from the orchestra's Endowment Trust and a public appeal.

Bill Kerr, Manchester branch secretary of the Musician's Union, which has 85 members in the Hallé, said: "The situation is the result of spectacularly poor management over the years."

● Nicholas Payne, the director of the Royal Opera, one of the Royal Opera House's two resident companies, was yesterday appointed to run the English National Opera.

The move comes in the wake of a damning parliamentary report, the resignation of its chairman and board, and continuing financial problems.

Mr Payne was one of the few figures at the House to retain the confidence of the staff. He was also the mover behind many of the Royal Opera's more adventurous productions.

Mr Payne replaces Dennis Marks as general director of ENO and will take up his post in the summer.

Mr Payne said yesterday: "ENO is a suberb company, playing a unique role in the popularising of opera. I am honoured to be asked to lead the company during these challenging times."

His departure leaves the ROH faced with the challenge of finding new creative leadership. The ROH will now be determined to hold on to conductor Bernard Haitinck, one of Royal Opera's star attractions.

News in brief

Cervical smear re-screening

MORE than 100 women have been recalled for re-screening after a review of 317 cervical smears taken between 1993 and 1997 at Lincoln County hospital revealed 180 had been wrongly reported as normal by a consultant.

A total of 34 women have already received follow-up treatment, another 34, whose second check showed inadequate or mild abnormalities, have been invited for a repeat smear and, 112 with moderate/severe abnormalities that were initially missed have been recalled for further examination.

A spokeswoman for the hospital said: "A moderate or severe cell change doesn't necessarily mean that a woman has cancer. However, a proportion of these women may have cancer. Women must attend for screening. It is women who don't come for screening regularly that get the really nasty cancers."

Race fixing arrest

A 34-YEAR-OLD man yesterday became the sixth suspect to be arrested in connection with police inquiries into alleged horse-doping and race fixing.

National Hunt jockeys Jamie Osborne, Dean Gallagher and Leighton Aspell have already been arrested over the alleged dopings of the Aspell-ridden Lively Knight and Osborne-partnered Avanti Express at Plumpton and Exeter last March.

Life for sex attack man

A 21-YEAR-OLD man described in court as a "quiet, respectful and courteous young person" was given two life sentences and jail terms totalling 69 years at the Old Bailey yesterday for a fortnight spell of sex attacks and burglaries on women.

Dennis Kellerman, of Brixton, south London, admitted 14 charges variously alleging burglary with intent to rape, wounding, attempted rape, indecent assaults, false imprisonment, burglary and actual bodily harm in July and August 1996. The court heard that two sisters were left devastated after he broke into their home in the night, forcing them to have oral sex with him. — *Jamie Wilson*

Private estate walk guides

COUNTRY landowners are to produce county by county guides of walks, riding, climbing and boating opportunities on their private estates in a bid to fight off the Government's right-to-roam legislation.

The Country Landowners Association believes it will give the public a better deal than a general right to roam which will only gives access to open land, mountains, moorland and common, but no extra rights on farmland. — *Paul Brown*

Reactor shutdown 'risky'

Paul Webster in Paris

THE French government's decision yesterday to dismantle the £6 billion Superphénix fast-breeder power plant at Creys-Malville, near the Swiss border, could lead to one of the most dangerous nuclear projects of the century.

The closure of the 1,240 megawatt reactor, which has produced only six months of electricity in 12 years of operation, is considered potentially more dangerous than its construction because no plan was drawn up to take it out of service.

The Green movement had demanded the plant's dismantling as a condition of its joining the leftwing government coalition in June. But the Greens' leader and environment minister, Dominique Voynet, said she was shocked to discover that no contingency programme existed to shut down a reactor containing five tonnes of plutonium and 5,000 tonnes of volatile radioactive liquid sodium.

The Superphénix, which was intended to produce more fuel than it consumed, will cost an estimated £3 billion and take at least 10 years to dismantle.

British, American and Russian scientists, who have been involved in running down much smaller fast-breeder plants, will be asked for advice.

While officials from the French state electricity service (EDF) claim important lessons have been learnt from the power plant, Superphénix is widely seen as the worst engineering setback that France has suffered this century.

Hurriedly designed during the 1970s' oil crisis, the plant suffered repeated breakdowns and was rarely connected to the national grid for more than a few weeks at a time.

The flagship turned white elephant fast breeder was also at the centre of continual political and social conflict, which looks likely to continue during the running-down period.

The plant has been dormant since December 1996, but staff want it to be restarted so as to burn off radioactive fuel.

Ms Voynet has warned that she will oppose even a temporary operation as well as proposals to use the site for stocking radioactive material or for underground nuclear laboratories.

But there is also concern locally for the loss of 2,000 jobs at the plant and thousands of others linked to ancillary services.

A government adviser on the closure, Jean-Pierre Aubert, told a ministerial meeting yesterday that a special aid programme was needed to create replacement work, and local villages and towns needed compensation for the huge debts they had incurred for new infrastructure projects linked to the nuclear site.

France's huge nuclear power industry generates 80 per cent of the country's electricity and is a powerful lobby. While some local groups fight the presence of nuclear facilities, others battle for them as a source of employment.

France must "convert the site to maintain the jobs and to respond to worries in communities that families will leave," Ms Voynet told France 2 television on Sunday.





British balloonist Andy Elson (left) repairs Orbiter's rear hatch yesterday, while the flight director, Alan Noble (above), maps their course at the Geneva control centre

Final appeal to fly over China

THREE European balloonists attempting to make the first non-stop flight around the world were waiting anxiously last night for the outcome of a final appeal to China to allow them to cross its territory.

As the Breitling Orbiter-2 crew headed over Pakistan from Iran, officials at its Geneva airport control centre said China's refusal would be a blow to their record attempt, in its sixth day.

"We are trying to get China's permission through all possible channels," said a spokesman for the flight, which was given a friendly welcome by Baghdad when winds blew the balloon unexpectedly into Iraqi airspace. "We are still hoping for good news."

Bertrand Piccard, a Swiss psychiatrist, Wim Verstraeten, a Belgian pilot, and Andy Elson, a British engineer, lifted off in the Orbiter last Wednesday from the Swiss Alps on its 15,000-mile journey.

After flying over Islamabad, the crew will set course for Lahore where, if they receive the green light from China, they will rise to more than 21,000ft to catch eastward jet-stream winds, carrying them over the Pacific and on to California. — *AP.*

World news in brief

Sri Lankan battle toll approaches 400

SRI LANKAN planes bombed Tamil Tiger rebel hideouts yesterday as troops cleared the northern Kilinochchi district where almost 400 combatants have died in the first big battle in more than a month, officials and state radio said.

They said 14 soldiers died overnight and troops had intercepted rebel radio messages indicating that the guerrillas had suffered 350 casualties. This raised the combined death toll from the weekend battle to 384.

The battle came just days before celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of independence. — *Reuters, Colombo.*

Indonesians riot over prices

SOCIAL unrest in Indonesia escalated further yesterday as thousands rioted on the islands of Java and Sulawesi amid rumours of rising fuel and food prices.

Riot police fired warning shots to disperse 300 youths in the south Sulawesi city of Ujungpandang. The youths were stoning shops thought to be overcharging for basics. In Pasuruan, eastern Java, 29 people were arrested after hundreds attacked a shop and houses during a demonstration against a 250 per cent kerosene price hike. — *John Aglionby, Jakarta.*

Murder silence broken

THE French film-producer and husband of Sophie Toscan du Plantier, whose murder in County Cork more than a year ago has still not been solved, has spoken for the first time since the killing and accused Irish police of mishandling the investigation.

Daniel Toscan du Plantier told the French daily Le Figaro that police had been "completely unable" to make a case against the only man they suspect. Mrs Toscan du Plantier was found battered to death on December 23 1996 in a lane near her holiday home in West Cork. — *Jon Henley, Paris.*

New president for Costa Rica

COSTA RICAN voters upset by high prices and inflation have chosen a conservative economist as their next president. Wearing the red and blue of the opposition Social Christian Unity Party, joyous revelers yesterday screamed the name of Miguel Angel Rodriguez.

With 59 per cent of the ballot boxes counted, he had 46.8 per cent of the vote, compared with 44.9 per cent for José Miguel Corrales of the National Liberation Party. Mr Corrales conceded defeat soon after the first results were announced. — *AP, San José.*

Russians fear syphilis spread

SYPHILIS cases in Russia have spread to near-epidemic scale, officials said yesterday. Some 392,000 Russians were infected last year — a 4.4 per cent increase on 1996, said Gennady Onishchenko, Russia's first deputy health minister.

The number of cases among under-14s soared by 31 per cent, he said. In most cases, children contracted the disease from their mothers. — *AP, Moscow.*

Philippines flight missing

A DOMESTIC Philippines commercial DC-9 plane with an unknown number of people on board last night failed to arrive at its destination in southern Mindanao and a search was under way, airport sources said. The Cebu Pacific domestic aircraft took off from Manila. — *Reuters, Manila.*

Groundhog's chilling forecast



Punxsutawney Phil, the world's most famous groundhog, tells Bill Cooper, president of the Inner Circle of Punxsutawney's Groundhog Club, yesterday to expect more ice and snow. Legend has it that winter will last six more weeks if the groundhog sees his shadow in the morning on Groundhog Day, which he apparently did. The prediction prompted boos from a Pennsylvania crowd that had been whooping it up for much of the night PHOTOGRAPH: JASON COHN

Algerian rounds on Morocco

THE former Algerian defence minister Khaled Nezzar, who still wields huge influence, said in remarks published yesterday that the border with Morocco was like a sieve through which guns were smuggled to Algerian guerrillas.

General Nezzar, in a signed commentary in El Watan newspaper, also denounced propaganda against Algeria which he said was being carried on a Moroccan radio station.

Relations between Morocco and Algeria have long been strained over a dispute in the Western Sahara, which is claimed by Morocco. Their land border has been closed since 1994.

Meanwhile, Algerian security forces at the weekend killed 60 rebels south of the capital Algiers, and 13 civilians, including a six-month-old baby who had his head smashed against a wall, were murdered in other parts of the country, Algerian newspapers reported. — *Reuters, Paris.*

Hammer falls on dictator kitsch

Jane Perlez in Bucharest

ROMANIA is planning a jumble sale of bric-à-brac hoarded by its late Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena.

"Most of it is pure kitsch," said Nicolae Petrescu, deputy director of the Museum of History in Bucharest, as he inspected storage rooms stuffed with gifts given to the Ceausescus by Communist Party groups and foreign dignitaries. "Does someone want to drink out of the tea-and-coffee set Brezhnev gave Ceausescu?"

Ceausescu displayed the gifts in glass cases in the museum. Schoolchildren learning about the popularity of the unpopular president were taken on field trips to inspect them.

Soon after the Ceausescus were overthrown and executed in 1989, the museum dismantled the display. Now, short of funds and tired of hoarding largely useless objects, it is organising an auction.

"It was all dumped on us from the very beginning of his rule," said Mr Petrescu, who was part of the retinue when Ceausescu visited the museum to inspect his goodies. "But most of the gifts he received from abroad were selected by him and his wife and kept in the palace."

He said the whereabouts of those more valuable gifts, including a French tapestry, were unknown.

Ceausescu, who ruled Romania from 1965, was one of the most repressive Communist dictators in eastern Europe, but because he was on unfriendly terms with the Soviet Union, the United States and other Western countries maintained fairly cordial relations with him.

The gifts give some indication of this: models of mooncraft from Nasa; a key from the city of New York; a 10-gallon hat from Texas. The French government was more generous: blue and gold Sèvres urns with portraits of the couple painted on the sides.

And the Soviets were not exactly stingy. Leonid Brezhnev's red and white tea and coffee service has nearly 100 pieces.

Governments from Africa to Asia gave the Ceausescus honorary degrees, complete with academic gowns.

But most of the pieces were ordered up by the Communist Party and fashioned by factory workers, who toiled over them for hours in preparation for a visit from the "beloved leader". A woodworking plant built a headboard with an inlaid design showing a youthful-looking president with a full head of hair and a cherubic smile.

Among the other bargains are imitation Tiffany glass vases, a pair of porcelain birds presented by the Rolls-Royce plant in England, sandals from Morocco, busts of the Ceausescus, fine porcelain and cheap crockery, and handbags and briefcases.

Mr Petrescu said the museum is preparing an inventory but has not fixed a date for the auction. It was also far from clear who might buy the stuff.

But for history's sake, the museum will hold on to several Ceausescu statues. They will serve as a reminder, he said, of the cult of personality. — *New York Times.*

Power play in Romania

PARTIES in Romania's fractured government jockeyed for position yesterday to end a month of turmoil and keep the centrist coalition afloat in parliament.

President Emil Constantinescu apologised for his remarks on Sunday expressing disgust at the disputes and accusing parties of violating an agreement he brokered last week.

He said his comments had been "ill-considered" and urged the government, weakened by a walkout by its second-largest party, to patch together a majority in parliament to enact overdue market reforms.

"Romania will sustain major damage unless there is agreement to end the crisis, give parliamentary support to the government and end all disputes," he said. — *Reuters.*

Belgian paedophile report puts blame on 'incompetent' police

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE Belgian paedophile ring uncovered 18 months ago escaped detection for so long because of endemic police incompetence, a parliamentary report says.

The report, leaked to the Belgian news agency before its offical presentation to parliament next week, scotches widespread rumours that the gang, led by Marc Dutroux, a builder from Charleroi, must have had backing from political or police contacts.

The report blames low-level corruption and the chaotic police investigation for the time taken to uncover and break up the gang.

The finding was criticised by Gino Russo, whose eight-year-old daughter Melissa was kidnapped in 1995 and left to starve to death in a cellar at Dutroux's house. The bodies of Melissa and her best friend, Julie Lejeune, also aged eight, were found buried in Dutroux's garden in August 1996.

Mr Russo said: "I don't believe the report's conclusions ... If [the gang] didn't have protection that makes it 100 times worse." The leak had been orchestrated to prepare Belgians for its findings before publication — also to protect those in authority, he claimed.

The parliamentary inquiry had been set up to investigate whether the paedophiles had received high-level protection. Its report found no evidence of that, but it repeats criticisms of the police search for Julie and Melissa made in a parliamentary report last year, for which it blames low-level officers.

At the time of the kidnappings, officers had Dutroux's house under surveillance and searched it three times while the girls were still alive. During one search, officers heard children's voices but did not investigate further.

Police received tip-offs about the activities of Dutroux, a convicted sex offender, two years before the girls were kidnapped, but did nothing. Rival police forces refused to share information and, at least once, tried to mislead colleagues.

So incompetent was the investigation that many Belgians, shocked by the corruption of the system and familiar with the discreetly informal workings of the establishment, were convinced that Dutroux, who is awaiting trial, must have been protected.

Such suspicions were fuelled by the arrests of Dutroux's associate, Michel Nihoul, a Brussels estate agent and political fixer, and Georges Zicot, the head of the Charleroi traffic police, who was suspected of ignoring Dutroux's car thefts.

Zicot and René Michaux, who headed the police surveillance operation in Charleroi, are condemned in the report. It says Mr Michaux ignored almost all the rules for a professional police inquiry when handling the investigation.

Mr Zicot said yesterday: "I've got nothing to reproach myself for ... they can't prove anything against me."

None of the officers involved has been disciplined. Some have been promoted.

The Belgian newspaper Le Soir said last night: "It is serious and insufferable. And perhaps it is even more pernicious that Dutroux did not have protection by an identified personality.

"That would have been a cyst which could have been cut out fairly easily, but this is a cancer which has to be treated carefully, and who knows whether the illness is malignant and perhaps incurable?"

'I don't believe it; if they didn't have protection that makes it 100 times worse'

Eurocrat parents lobby against jail-side school

Stephen Bates in Brussels

EVEN in a city as used to demonstrations as Brussels, the protest by Eurocrats and their spouses outside the Centre Borschette conference building was unprecedented.

The sight of 300 affluent protesters chanting, waving placards and handing out leaflets last week was so unnerving that police were summoned.

But even stranger was the subject of the demonstration: a protest over a dilapidated school causing tension between the Belgian government and potentially one of the most influential lobbying groups in Brussels — the families of Eurocrats and diplomats whose children attend the European School, set up to teach the offspring of European Union officials.

They were lobbying the school's governing body over Belgian government plans to move some of the children from the school at a chateau in the suburb of Uccle to a new site in a narrow inner-city side street next to Brussels' three prisons.

The school was built for 1,800 pupils but has more than 3,400, aged from four to 18. Overcrowding has been made worse by the discovery of asbestos cladding in several of the 1960s classroom blocks; half the school may have to close for building work for up to five years.

At the heart of the row is the Belgian authorities' reluctance to spend extra money on the school when they are slashing public spending, including on their own schools, to try to qualify for the single currency.

The Belgian authorities have modified their plan by saying they no longer intend to open a paedophile rehabilitation unit next door. Georges Vlandas, president of the parents' association, said: "The site isn't appropriate for educational purposes because of the physical and psychological risks to the children."

The plan has aroused almost total opposition among parents and angry confrontations between the association and the school, which has accepted the plans.

One British parent said: "We know the reputation of Belgium so far as criminals and sex offenders is concerned and to have them roaming the street where our children are going to school is asking for trouble."

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON THE VOTING SYSTEM

The Independent Commission on the Voting System, chaired by Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, is seeking views on alternatives to the current "first-past-the-post" system of elections to the House of Commons.

The Commission would welcome reasoned submissions in writing from any person or organisation interested in the subject.

The Commission's terms of reference are:-

"The Commission will be free to consider and recommend any appropriate system or combination of systems in recommending an alternative to the present system for Parliamentary elections to be put before the people in the Government's referendum.

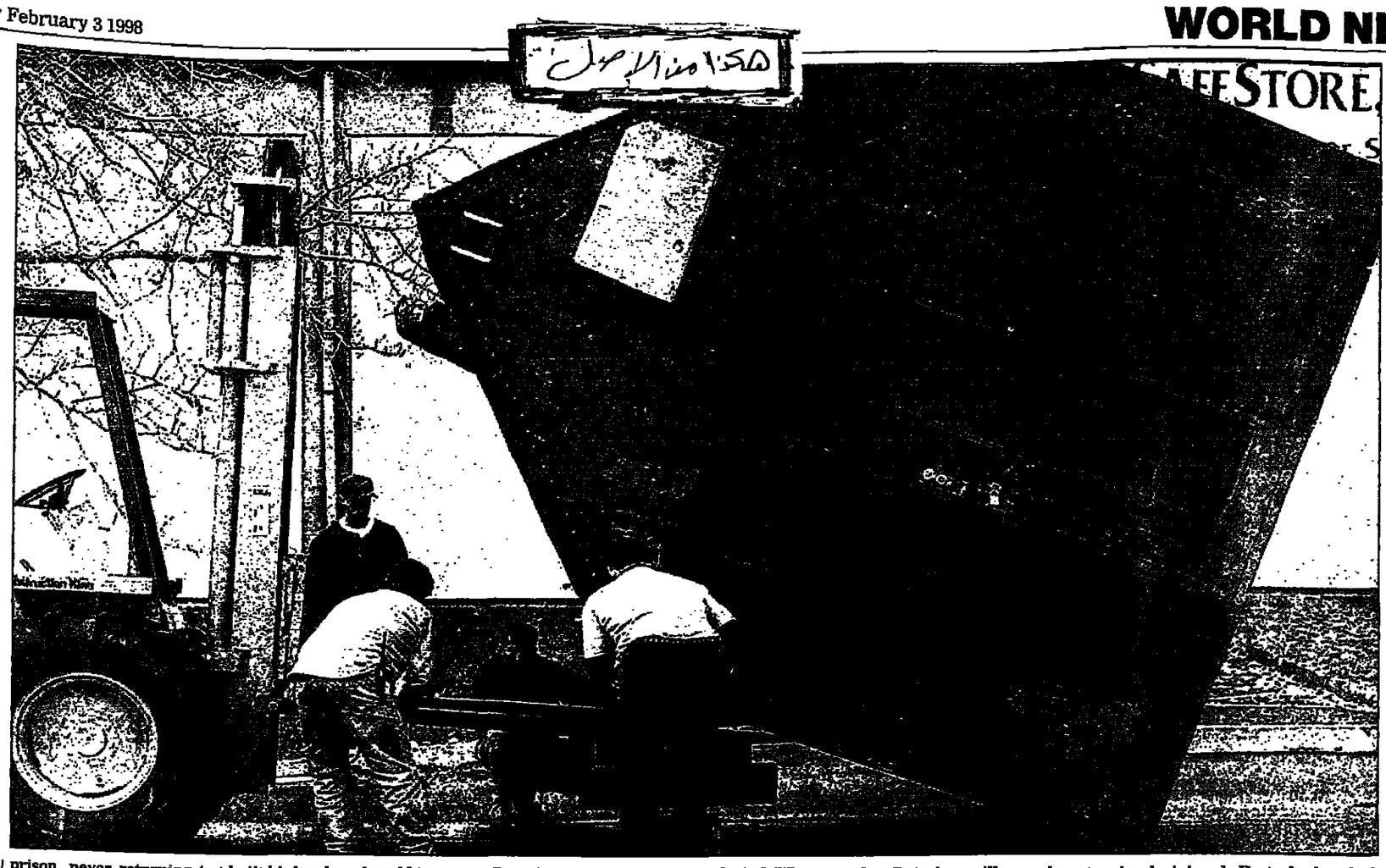
The Commission shall observe the requirement for broad proportionality, the need for stable government, an extension of voter choice and the maintenance of a link between MPs and geographical constituencies."

Written submissions should be brief, and sent soon (before the end of February, if at all possible) to the Independent Commission on the Voting System at

6th Floor, Clive House, Petty France, LONDON SW1H 9HD

or e-mailed to: votingcom@holis.demon.co.uk

Shed for sale, one bomb builder owner: apply to county jail



Workers unload the Unabomber's one-roomed shack on its arrival in California after the long journey from the forests of Montana. Theodore Kaczynski's residence in it, without electricity or running water, was to have been used as evidence of his supposedly disturbed mental state, but his plea bargain meant no trial took place

PHOTOGRAPH: RICH PEDRONCELLI

Mark Gladstone in Sacramento

A MONTH ago Theodore Kaczynski's grimy, one-room wood cabin was set to be a critical piece of evidence in the high-profile Unabomber trial.

Now Kaczynski has pleaded guilty to murder and other charges and will spend the rest of his life in prison, never returning to the quiet woods of Montana where he built his shack.

So what to do with his tiny home, whose 1,100-mile journey from the Rockies was chronicled by television news crews as it travelled on the back of a truck to Sacramento, where the trial was being held?

Might the cabin — where Kaczynski is said to have built his bombs — be sold to offset court costs, or to provide funds to help bomb victims? Could it be sold and used as a tourist attraction?

"We still don't know. It's still up in the air," said Quin Denvir, Kaczynski's main defence lawyer. "It may not be decided until after the [formal] sentencing," which is scheduled for May 15.

Mr Denvir said there might be potential buyers for the cabin. But, he explained, even though his client owns the shack, "in the end, it will probably be up to the court . . . It can't be disposed of without an order of the court."

Until Kaczynski's plea bargain last month, his lawyers had planned to use the cabin as evidence of the former mathematician's troubled mind. What sort of man would live for 20 years in a cramped shack without electricity or running water?

"In our view, the cabin symbolises what had happened to this professor and how he had come to live," Mr Denvir said in December after the cabin arrived in Sacramento. "When people think about this case, they think about the cabin."

But a jury will never hear those points.

On January 22, after weeks of legal wrangling, Kaczynski, aged 55, accepted a plea bargain, and prosecutors agreed to drop plans to execute him for being the anti-technology Unabomber.

Kaczynski pleaded guilty to charges related to bombings in which three men were killed and two others seriously injured. He took responsibility for 11 more bombings that injured 29 people in an 18-year campaign of terrorism.

Prosecutors said Kaczynski spent hours in his cabin writing his manifesto, as well as crafting intricate bombs which he posted to his victims. When Kaczynski was arrested in April 1996 at his shack, the FBI found a completed bomb inside ready for dispatch.

Pending an evaluation by probation officials, Kaczynski remains in Sacramento county jail.

Leesa Brown, a spokeswoman for the prosecutors, said the government has no say over the cabin. However, she noted that victims or their families might have a claim to any profits from a sale. — *Los Angeles Times.*

Casino strikers' gamble pays off

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

STRIKERS in Las Vegas have won a $3.5 million (£2.18 million) settlement against the Frontier hotel and casino, after walking out in a union dispute more than six years ago.

Chambermaids, porters and kitchen staff have since picketed the casino continuously, seeking recognition for their union and higher pay. They will share the settlement for back wages and benefits, half of which will come from the new owner, the hotelier Phillip Ruffin, and the rest from the former owner Margaret Elardi.

In September 1991, 550 members of the Culinary Union stopped work after the management refused to match contracts offered by most other casino-hotels in the gambling capital in the Nevada desert. Of those still striking, 280 will return to their jobs and 100 will be laid off with benefits.

"It's been a long, hard fight, but worth every minute of it because we made it together," said Kathleen Hahn, with tears in her eyes, as she watched workmen erecting a banner over the hotel that read: "Everyone Welcome. Strike's Over." She said: "We only expected it to last a few weeks at the most."

Las Vegas is one of the most unionised cities in the United States, and the Frontier stoppage turned into a last stand by those who oppose organised labour in the booming tourist business. The Culinary Union has more than 40,000 members, and last year it won a three-year strike against the MGM Grand, one of the biggest casinos.

Chambermaids often own their own homes and send their well-dressed children to school on a full stomach — something few workers in the notoriously ill-paid US catering and hotel business can do. Waitresses make $12 an hour before tips in Las Vegas, double the money in most cities.

The longest recorded strike in the US was an auto-workers' stoppage in Wisconsin that lasted from April 1954 to October 1962.

Clinton backers deflect scrutiny to Starr's role

Martin Kettle in Washington

A FORTNIGHT after allegations of an affair whipped up a storm that seemed to threaten Bill Clinton's presidency, the clouds are gathering over his tormenter-in-chief, the independent counsel Kenneth Starr.

With public opinion hardening against his role in the crisis, Mr Starr and his office are increasingly seen as the problem rather than the solution. Calls for reform of the independent counsel system are growing louder.

He made a rare public comment yesterday on investigations into whether Mr Clinton pressured Monica Lewinsky to lie about the alleged affair. He told CNN: "We're moving with good speed."

His office was "trying to assemble the facts and get to the truth as quickly as we can".

However, with negotiations with Ms Lewinsky's lawyers seemingly stalled, Mr Starr is finding it increasingly hard to overcome the public perception that he has spent $30 million (£18 million) of public money pursuing a frequently petty series of politically motivated vendettas against the most important leader in the world. An opinion poll in the latest issue of Time magazine finds that a majority of almost two to one thinks he has gone too far.

Mr Clinton's most partisan supporters see Mr Starr as a conservative activist given free rein to seize on any and every allegation and use it against the president, placing him at the centre of the "vast, rightwing conspiracy" about which Hillary Clinton complained last week.

He is finding it hard to overcome the public perception that he spent $30 million pursuing vendettas

These claims seemed to gain credence last week when Mr Starr subpoenaed Robert Weiner — press spokesman for the drugs "czar" General Barry McCaffrey — for making phone calls attacking the former Pentagon official Linda Tripp, one of Mr Starr's key witnesses.

After 40 minutes before the Washington grand jury, Mr Weiner emerged to complain: "I believe we have experienced the witch hunt and partisanship that the American people resent about this case."

Events such as this have emboldened the president's supporters. A White House source complained yesterday that the independent counsel's office, established after the Watergate scandal in the 1970s, has become "simply an office for the inquisition of the president of the United States". The office "perverts the political system", the source said, and "must now be brought to heel".

Democrats have begun to focus on the need for reform of the independent counsel system, and many experts back them.

Cass Sunstein, a law professor at the University of Chicago and a Clinton sympathiser, said yesterday that it was time to reform the office. "The problem is that this is one person focusing on one other person and often on just one event. That narrowness is inimical both to justice and to the public good."

The New York Times columnist Anthony Lewis wrote yesterday: "The independent counsel statute has given us a creature outside the constitutional system."

A Senate committee had already planned to hold hearings this summer on the future of the independent counsel law which, unless renewed by Congress, expires next year. Although Republicans have criticised the law in the past, its future probably depends on whether the Democrats regain control of Congress in this year's midterm elections.

Men in black track white lightning

Tom Verde in Rocky Mount, Virginia

CROUCHED in a thicket, Jay Calhoun, a special agent of the Virginia liquor taskforce, waited for the baying watchdogs to lose interest.

He called out to his two colleagues, "Let's go, the gig's up," and they headed for a corrugated-steel building, a "still house" less than 50 yards away through the trees.

They suspected moonshine was being made there and arrived just in time to block the escape of two suspects, who looked on as the agents used axes to break up the four 800-gallon stills.

Moonshining, which endures in many Southern rural towns, is not as widespread as it was during Prohibition. But authorities say the illegal manufacture and sale of whisky remains a multimillion-dollar business, with ties to gun trafficking and drugs, and established markets as far north as New York.

Jimmy Beheler, assistant special agent in charge of the liquor taskforce, the only squad dedicated to combating moonshiners, estimates that 500,000 gallons of moonshine are distilled in Virginia each year, much of it in Franklin county, the "moonshine capital of the South". With a street value of about $25 (£15.50) a gallon, moonshine in Virginia is a $12.5 million industry.

"There's still a big demand out there for it, or else moonshiners wouldn't be making hundreds of gallons a week," said Randy Knight, an alcohol law enforcement official. — *New York Times.*

US puts Turkey under pressure

Washington seeks unconditional support in its battle with Iraq, writes **Chris Morris** in Ankara

A HIGH-LEVEL United States delegation attempted to drum up support in Ankara yesterday for Washington's campaign to force Iraq to co-operate with the United Nations.

The vice-chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, General Joseph Ralston, said there had been no formal request to use Incirlik air base in southern Turkey if military action against Iraq goes ahead.

The delegates were sounding out opinion from their Turkish counterparts at yesterday's talks — and hoping for a positive response.

US and British planes are already stationed at Incirlik, near the Mediterranean coast. The base is the headquarters of Operation Northern Watch, which patrols Kurdish areas of northern Iraq. A UN no-fly zone prevents the Iraqi air force from operating in the region.

Turkey shares concern about Iraq's potential to develop weapons of mass destruction, but has made it clear that it thinks all diplomatic options should be explored before any decision on military action is made.

The Turkish foreign minister, Ismael Cem, said he would travel to Iraq this weekend to join mediators from other countries.

Although one of Washington's closest allies in the region, Turkey has kept diplomatic channels with Baghdad open.

The US delegation appeared to damn Mr Cem's efforts with faint praise. If mediation "can produce a result, we would welcome that", said Marc Grossman, the assistant secretary of state for Europe. "But I must say that we are sceptical given the past Iraqi behaviour."

The US recognises that Turkey is in a sensitive position, and that following a US line on this issue is not always politically popular. Turkey was an important part of the coalition against Iraq during the Gulf war in 1991, but it has lost billions of pounds in trade revenue because of UN sanctions against Baghdad.

One of the parties which forms the Turkish government, led by the deputy prime minister, Bulent Ecevit, is strongly opposed to any co-operation with a US military campaign. Mr Ecevit has said publicly that the use of Incirlik is out of the question.

"We are trying to persuade the US to be patient," he said yesterday. "Unless diplomacy is exhausted, a military operation will be dangerous and Turkey will suffer the consequences."

The prime minister, Mesut Yilmaz, has not yet made such a definitive statement. Like many senior military leaders, he is cautious about upsetting the US on such an important issue.

It is possible that the US will not ask for permission to use Incirlik. Defence analysts in Ankara point out that the US already has plenty of firepower on warships in the Gulf. The last time the US attacked Iraq, in September 1996, bombers flew from as far away as Guam, in the Pacific Ocean, to avoid using Turkish bases.

A possible compromise would be for Incirlik to be used as part of a support network, rather than as a base for bombing campaigns. But it remains an extremely delicate subject. As the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, is finding out the appetite for military action against Iraq is not what it was a few years ago.

Hugo Young, page 9; Analysis, page 11

'Black gold' mocks blockade

In the race to get at Turkmenistan's riches, oil and gas firms are ignoring sanctions on Iran, reports **James Meek** in Ashkhabad

UNITED STATES efforts to enforce an international investment blockade of Iran face collapse as European and Asian energy companies, with British firms in the lead, rush to use the Gulf state as a route to move oil and natural gas from landlocked Central Asia.

The British-Dutch Shell group and the young British company Monument Oil are leading consortia to build pipelines from the former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan into Iran and the world market beyond, defying the threat of US sanctions.

The issue signifies a rift between the US and Europe and will be on the agenda when President Bill Clinton and Tony Blair meet this week.

Like most of the despotic former Soviet rulers of Central Asia and the Caucasus, Turkmenistan's president, Saparmurad Niyazov, has been courted and encouraged by the US in his attempts to reduce dependence on Russia.

But the Turkmens, sitting on the world's fourth-largest reserves of natural gas, yet broke because they cannot sell it, say they have been cut off for decades from their southern neighbour Iran by the ideological whims of Moscow, and will not allow another superpower to resurrect the barriers.

Yolbar Kephanov, a senior Turkmen energy official in the capital, Ashkhabad, said: "By all means let the US say straight out, 'Don't make friends with Iran'. But we can't do that, because we're a neutral country.

"In principle everyone has to be equal in our eyes but Iran has to come first. We've got 1,500km [900 miles] of common border. There are 2 million Turkmen in the north of Iran. We have to co-operate with them."

'The American policy hinders US oil firms, which is to our advantage. It's not sustainable'

In Soviet times Turkmenistan fed the USSR's industrial heartlands with gas worth billions of pounds at world prices. It got little back.

Once the hub of the Silk Road between China and Persia, Turkmenistan was turned into an artificial dead end, its border with Iran one of the most tightly-sealed and heavily guarded folds of the Iron Curtain.

Political independence in 1991 did nothing to change dependence on Russia's pipeline network, which transports its gas, at huge expense, to countries such as Ukraine that can't afford to pay for it.

Building new pipelines through Iran to solvent customers seemed like the perfect solution. But there was a major obstacle: the 1996 Iran-Libya Sanctions Act passed by the US Congress. It was designed to punish any firm investing more than $20 million (£12 million) in Iran.

"US policy is to oppose all pipelines across Iran," said one western source in Ashkhabad. "The Turkmens know the light is red, believe me. They know it by now."

Mr Niyazov is jumping the lights. In March he switched off the gas to Russia, and in December triumphantly joined Iran's President Mohammad Khatami in opening a new gas pipeline between the two neighbours.

The pipeline is small and will do little for the Turkmen economy. But it is the first ever energy export route from the former USSR to be outside Russia's control. That makes it a psychological breakthrough for the Turkmens.

More is to come. Already concerned by last year's £1.2 billion French-Russian-Malaysian deal to develop an Iranian gas field, the US is now watching Shell carry out a nine-month survey of a future 940-mile pipeline to carry Turkmen gas through Iran to Turkey.

Monument is studying a project for a pipeline to carry Turkmen oil into Iran.

"The American policy doesn't affect us directly," said a Monument executive in Ashkhabad. "What it does do is hinder the American oil companies, which is to our advantage. I don't think it's sustainable."



Workers in Ashkhabad, PHOTOGRAPH: RUBEN MAUGASARYAN

For American oil firms in Turkmenisatn, these are difficult times. In what may be farsighted optimism or simple desperation, California's Unocal is leading a consortium to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to the Indian subcontinent through the war-ravaged chaos of Afghanistan.

"The US state department doesn't like the idea of him shipping gas down to Iran," said Scott Barber, head of Unocal's Ashgabat Ashkhabad operation, "The bottom line is that he has to sell his gas."

The Guardian
Tuesday February 3 1998
Edition Number 47088
119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER
Fax No. 0171-837 4530
E-mail: letters@guardian.co.uk
Website: http://www.guardian.co.uk

Only one for the road

Lowering the drink limit by itself isn't enough

IS NO-ONE except the drinks industry going to challenge the call to lower the drink-drive limit? Ministers will be gratified by the response to yesterday's consultative document on drink-driving. They have made no secret of their wish to lower the current drink-driving limit of 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood down to 50mg — roughly, depending on an individual's metabolism, down from two-and-a-half pints of beer to a pint. For women it would be even lower. Police chiefs, the British Medical Association and even the Automobile Association backed the lowering of the limit yesterday. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents went one better urging the government to adopt a "none for the road" limit by the year 2000.

There are serious arguments why a lower limit might make sense. Ministers are right to resist becoming complacent in the face of the steep drop in drink-drive fatalities — down two-thirds in the last two decades. Even with this drop over 500 people are killed every year in accidents involving existing illegal alcohol levels — and to these victims have to be added another 15,000 people who suffer injuries, some of them hideous. Moreover drink-drive fatalities flattened out in 1993, remaining at an estimated 540 for the last four consecutive years. Worse still, research suggests the chance of a driver being involved in an accident doubles after a pint. Although current statistics do not include people with blood alcohol readings below 80mg, yesterday's document estimates about 80 road users are killed every year in accidents where one driver has a blood alcohol reading of between 50 and 80mg.

The current 80mg limit was adopted in a totally different age. Barbara Castle, the transport minister at the time, recognised there would be widespread public opposition to restrictions on drink-driving in 1967 and deliberately chose a pragmatic limit. There has been a dramatic change in public attitudes since then. Surveys show the proportion claiming to leave their car at home when drinking has grown from 54 to 75 per cent — and the proportion claiming to arrange for someone else to drive has expanded from 46 to 68 per cent. A Guardian/ICM poll last month found overwhelming public support for lowering the limit to 50gm: 85 per cent approved (75 per cent "strongly") compared to just 13 per cent opposed.

With such arguments — and such professional and public backing — ministers might seem to have a watertight case. But it's not that simple. France has the lower level of 50mg but twice as many fatalities as the UK. Greece has a 50mg limit and three times the fatalities. Lowering the limit by itself will not make people drink less. Detection is the great deterrent, not the fear of losing your driving licence. One Home Office study suggested 250 people break the existing drink-drive limit for every one caught. Others have put the number at 1,000 to one. There is no discussion of these harsh facts in yesterday's document. Ministers are ready to widen police powers to stop suspect drivers — for example down the road from a pub with a notorious reputation for excessive drinking. That's the right approach. Making detection more certain will certainly reduce drink-driving. But what will happen to public opinion if this is tied to a new 50mg limit? Chances are there will be a damaging erosion of public support. Restricting the penalty of the lower limit to fines is an option but ministers were playing down this two-tier justice idea yesterday. Over half of all people currently convicted have a blood alcohol reading of over 150mg. Why not go for random breath tests first and see what happens? Retaining public support is crucial.

It's the economy, Cupid

Clinton delivers growth, low inflation and a surplus

FIVE years ago when Bill Clinton's budget package resulted in a cliff-hanging two-vote victory for the President, Newt Gingrich predicted that it would lead to a recession the following year for which he would hold each of the Democrats concerned responsible. Well, not only did the recession not happen then but it hasn't happened since. The US economy is now in its seventh successive year of recovery with barely a hint of inflation. Yesterday President Clinton proved that he can run the nation's affairs much more successfully than his own when he announced a budget for the next fiscal year sporting the first surplus for 30 years. For America this is a moment in history. President Reagan had been elected on a platform to eliminate the budget deficit but by the time the Republicans had been ousted from office in 1992, the Bush administration bequeathed a record $290 billion deficit. It was left to the so-called free-spending Democrats to deliver the Republican's manifesto.

Cynics will say that Clinton was able to contain spending mainly because he was restrained by a hostile Congress and had to ditch, or at least postpone, many of his social reforms. On the monetary side he was lucky to have Federal Reserve head Alan Greenspan at the helm, whose deft restraint on interest rates and intuitive understanding of counter-inflationary forces in the economy, undoubtedly prolonged the recovery. But, as with his personal affairs, Clinton must be given the credit for making his own luck. Shortly before he came into office America was starting to be written off as a technological force even by its own business journals in favour of Japan. Now it all looks different. Japan is nursing its self-inflicted fiscal wounds while the US has seized what seems like an unassailable lead in the digital revolution and positively exudes technological self-confidence. It enters its seventh year of recovery with growth strong (3.7 per cent), unemployment (4.7 per cent) and inflation (1.7 per cent) remarkably low and with the pace of business investment resumed at what the normally reticent OECD describes as a "torrid" pace.

The President yesterday predicted a surplus of $9.5 billion surplus in the fiscal year starting Oct 1 (three years ahead of schedule) and thereafter surpluses "as far as the eye can see". This didn't stop Republicans — cheekily — accusing him of embarking on a spending spree instead of cutting taxes. The President is prudentially planning to put some of the surplus into a social security reserve to fund retirement for the baby boom generation while also earmarking revenue from higher corporate taxes and the levy on the tobacco industry for cutting class sizes and improving child care. Good for him. Meanwhile, as Tony Blair prepares for his US visit, he will have plenty of lessons to ponder. Particularly in the area of pre-electoral war chests.

Up from under the Crown

Perhaps we are all Republicans now?

AUSTRALIA has now begun its "fair dinkum debate" — as promised last year by the deputy prime minister — on the Queen's position as head of state. Opening a two-week convention in Canberra on the subject, Prime Minister John Howard made only a token effort to press his monarchist sympathies. He did not believe, he said, that the alternatives "so far canvassed" would deliver a better system. But Mr Howard also acknowledged that Australia's ties with Britain have diminished in the past 40 years. He knows that more than half the Australian public already supports a republic — a figure which rose to two thirds in the latest poll at the weekend.

Two centuries of immigration — whether forced or voluntary — which came mainly from Britain and Ireland have long ago fizzled out. Today more than half of Australia's immigrant population (constituting one in four of the total population) was born in non-English speaking countries. Only 30 years ago, there were less than 40,000 non-Europeans in Australia. Now there are as many immigrants every year from People's China as from the Queen's Britain.

The constitutional link to the Queen suffered for many Australians a fatal injury 22 years ago when the Governor General of the time, Sir John Kerr, sacked Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. It was done in the Queen's name although she would have known nothing about it. There is still a streak of sympathy for the Queen in person — although not her family. Even Mr Howard on taking up office took care to explain he was swearing allegiance to the Queen — but not to "her heirs and successors." Nor can we really complain, in a Britain where the behaviour of those same heirs and successors has given republicanism a new legitimacy.



Letters to the Editor

How to stop Mr Murdoch

POLLY Toynbee (Will Blair dare?, February 2) is absolutely right to point the finger at Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation for the underlying problems currently besetting the Independent.

The "savage price war" to which Toynbee refers has only been made possible because News Corporation is able to cross-subsidise the Times through the monopoly profits generated by its broadcasting operater, BSkyB. In the absence of changes to competition law, this threatens the very diversity and plurality of the press that is one of the cornerstones of the democratic process.

However, what Toynbee fails to mention is that Parliament has the opportunity to act next Monday when the House of Lords considers our all-party amendment to the Government's Competition Bill. If this is carried, it will prevent any national newspaper abusing its position by selling below cost to damage its rivals, bringing the newspaper price wars to an end, once and for all.
Lord McNally.
Viscount Astor.
House of Lords,
London SW1A 0PW.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address

Fear and fatherhood

I REALLY hope that members of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority read Catherine Bennett's article (Donor dads, January 31). They seem to accept as given that having information about one's family doesn't necessarily contribute to the development of a happy human being.

In 1994, J Owusu-Bempah (Leicester University) discovered that children who possessed adequate and favourable information about an absent parent fared better on measures of behaviour, academic achievment and emotional well-being. He was exploring why children in single-parent families score low on these measurements, regardless of material circumstance, or of how much love is being handed out.

I was born illegitimate and unwanted. I have been able to trace both my natural mother and father. The fantasies and identity crises that crowded my youth have now been replaced by the unremarkable knowledge of who my parents are and, importantly, what they look like. Had I grown up to find out that my father donated his sperm and cared not a toss whether I lived or didn't, I think I'd be really screwed up. Parents, eh!
Joanna Traynor.
1 Birchland Road,
Plymouth PL7 5DN.

UNLESS it becomes accepted by society and the law that there are differences between becoming a father through socially-binding marriage or partnerships and purely biological means, the plight of the donor inseminated child will continue.

Has it not crossed Catherine Bennett's mind, for instance, that the threat of the Child Support Agency is a major component of a donor insemination company's overriding wish for the anonymity of its donors?

Fear will continue to deny DI children information. Donor men could become pursued by hundreds of financial claims as a result of the actions of the clinic using their sperm, as well as hundreds of later personal painful contacts. Donor men who later choose their own close relationships, with resulting children, may find changes in the law undermining the families they have chosen to form.

The consequences of failing to address these concerns will inevitably lead to men abandoning clinics. They can already see what happens to men "entrapped" by women lying in order to conceive, such as Elizabeth Buttle (Trick by woman, 60, brings calls for fertility curbs, January 22).

Men, as well as women and the resulting children, have a fundamental right to have their choice recognised. The sentiment "No-one has thought of the child in this" does not deal one jot with the father. Men can also have feelings too, surprisingly enough. While a real debate on the role of fatherhood, including men themselves, is denied, nothing will change.
Helen Stewart.
Frankfurt am Main,
Germany.



A bad deal for good people

WITH regard to the recent debate on doctors' pay (Leader, January 31), my wife currently works as a house officer in a central London hospital. Her basic salary for 40 hours a week, with no guaranteed breaks, is £15,440. For enforced overtime of 32 hours a week, combining both weekend and all-night work, she is paid the derisory sum of £3.71 per hour.

It is a sad reflection of the worth of doctors that if the Government introduces a minimum wage, they would be one of the first groups to benefit.
T M Johnson.
46a Quicks Road,
London SW19 1EY.

THE pay rise for nurses would just about keep us in line with inflation, except for a few things. Gradings are being manipulated so that nurses not protected by national contracts are effectively being downgraded. Parking charges now cost many nurses in excess of £70 a year and higher grades are being discouraged from working weekends and bank holidays, losing them around £1,500 a year.

If the Health Minister, Frank Dobson, wants to retain staff, improve efficiency and maintain a high level of morale within the service, we should do away with trusts, bring back national grading systems and kick the backside of those local despots who are destroying the goodwill of nursing and medical personnel.
Peter Wellum.
50 Sidegate Lane,
Ipswich, Suffolk.

TONY Blair claims that big wage increases would fuel inflation and jeopardise the UK economy in the coming years. The big wage increase he speaks of was to be 3.8 per cent of £12,500 (for a D-grade staff nurse), which works out at around £8.41 per week. This would not even fuel the cost of driving to work each day for a week.
John Yorston.
52 Burnieboozle Crescent,
Aberdeen AB15 8NQ.

PHASING the teachers' pay award will not save the Treasury any money. Under local management of schools' procedures, teachers are paid by the schools themselves, from the money allocated to them by local authorities. The local authorities, in turn, obtain much of their money from the Treasury, but allocations for this year have already been decided.
Brian Lewis.
5 Maple Close, Brackley,
Northants NN13 6EX.

Clean meat is dirty business

THE "naming and shaming" of Toby Baker's Nailsea abattoir (Abattoirs warned on threats to inspectors, January 30) illustrates the futility of a system which measures neither hygiene nor the quality of the product produced by British abattoirs. I have visited Mr Baker's slaughterhouse many times and, as a qualified environmental health officer and meat inspector, can vouch that it is by no means unhygienic. It is the model of a small, rural slaughterhouse, the like of which should be encouraged.

Mr Baker's mistake has been his refusal to be cowed by the increasingly irrational demands of the Meat Hygiene Service, which purports to protect the consumer from unhygienic meat but is itself responsible for much of the contamination of meat, through its outdated and suspect inspection practices.

The hygiene scoring system is highly subjective, and includes such gems as "management", the marks awarded taking into account the degree of "co-operation" with MHS staff. On the basis of an unrepresentative (low) score, the MHS feels entitled to increase its level of supervision, for which it levies a considerable charge, on top of the massive fees it already extorts from the industry — higher than anywhere else in Europe.

This practice amounts to an administrative fine on slaughterhouses judged to be unco-operative, and is a measure which has greater effect than any penalty awarded by a court. Yet it escapes the normal checks and balances which apply to other citizens.

The public needs to wake up to what is being done in the name of "hygiene", and ask whether the production of meat, simply by virtue of being an unpopular — in some quarters — trade, entitles government officials to rule by diktat in a manner which would have the civil liberties lobby rushing for the European Court of Human Rights, were it applied in another context. The MHS has lost touch with reality; it has become part of the problem — not the solution.
Dr Richard North.
Croft Mill, Sharp Street,
Wibsey, Bradford BD6 1LY.

Forsyth saga

MARGARET Palmer (Letters, January 31) is quite right: I am no expert in employment law. But even a scribbler has to try to get his facts right. In the first mention of Ms Bullen's name in public, the FCO said her service had been "exemplary". Within 24 hours, it was alleged that:

a) She was not a career civil servant. True, but she was a civil servant. Summary dismissal habitually follows a single outrageous act or sustained incompetence. Ms Bullen demonstrated neither.

b) She was a political appointee. Not true. Douglas Hurd did indeed suggest her name, but FCO vetting established that she had 30 years' experience and glowing references.

c) She was a "card-carrying" Conservative. Not true. Messrs Hurd and Davis confirmed that she had always done her job conscientiously and never mentioned party politics.

Ms Palmer may have lost her job during the Tory government, but I doubt if any Cabinet minister marched into a press conference to ensure that she never got another one.
Frederick Forsyth.
Hertford, Herts.

In brief

WALTER Cairns (Letters, February 2) was right to contrast the growth of fast bowlers with the unchanged length of the cricket pitch. But his proposal to lengthen the pitch would be unfair to spinners. It would be better to force fast bowlers to deliver with part of the front foot behind the bowling crease — giving the batsman an extra four feet in which to see them — while letting slow bowlers deliver, as now, from behind the popping crease.
Richard Heller.
30 Crewsdon Road,
London SW9 0LJ.

WHAT a brilliant notion of David Crown's (Letters, January 31) that the money which the Government plans to spend on the "Millennium white elephant" should go to improving the London Underground. For the majority of us, who prefer to live anywhere rather than in that self-regarding city, that would be about as relevant a way of celebrating the year 2000 as Mr Mandelson's.
Peter J Hampson.
Blakeway Cottage,
Shrewsbury SY5 6LT.

More trouble on the Liverpool waterfront

AS a trade unionist, I find totally unacceptable the way Bill Morris tries to justify his union's stance in the Liverpool docks dispute (Letters, January 30), which, by failing to act, forced the dock-workers to end their heroic struggle.

I had the privilege to meet these men and convey my union's support. Yes, Mr Morris did negotiate a pay settlement for them, but it was in favour of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Company and not in the interest of his members. The T&G, having done nothing to fight anti-union legislation — indeed sitting and hiding behind these same laws — are guilty of complicity.

The Liverpool dockers deserve immense praise from all of us around the world for standing firm for their union rights, something their own union has forgotten.
A Haikalis.
Panhellenic Union of
Merchant Marine Engineers,
21 Bouboulinas Street,
18535 Piraeus, Greece.

INSTEAD of just obeying "the most repressive anti-union laws in the western world", why doesn't Bill Morris's union fight them?

I worked at a firm where, for £3 an hour, we had to stand up throughout our 12-hour shifts, both day and night, and only got breaks at the management's discretion. We had to ask permission before going to the toilet. We were not entitled to holiday or sick pay. Women were denied basic maternity rights.

I organised a union (T&G) and was sacked. The T&G assured me that they would fight it all the way. Four days before my appeal for leave of the court to pursue my case at an industrial tribunal, I was informed by the solicitors that the union would "no longer continue with further financial support". The union also had my application to the industrial tribunal struck out.

Like the dockers, my case was, in John Pilger's words (Letters, January 29), "lost because the T&G virtually guaranteed its failure".
Nigel Cook.
129 Preston New Road,
Blackburn, Lancs BB2 6BJ.

BILL Morris says the dockers' dispute cost his union £1 million. The T&G rule says lock-out pay will be £40 per week. Therefore, following instructions from Mr Morris and deputy leader Jack Adams to return to work within days of the dispute starting, and over 300 dockers being locked out for more than two years, my union really did get off cheap.

Mr Morris blames John Pilger for giving false hope and prolonging the agony. He might just as well blame my mum, who gave part of her pension each week to the dockers' families long before John became prominent in the dispute.
John Bohanna.
2 Bunting Court,
Okell Dene Estate,
Liverpool L26 7XX.

A Country Diary

CHESHIRE: As I walked towards the northern woods, past the chapel and the old cedar of Lebanon tree, I was surprised to see bright green leaves — the bread and cheese of my younger days — on the hawthorn hedge that lined the path, and behind the small church, a large rhododendron bush covered with bright pink flowers. It was the bitterly cold easterly wind and grey sky that reminded me it was still only late January. I was on my way to find a small shrub, whose normal flowering period is late January — the spurge laurel — having noticed that its only relative in the UK, the mezereon, was already in full bloom in a neighbour's garden. Near the large ox-bow, I stopped to see if the snowdrops had appeared again and found just one small patch of strap-shaped, blue-green leaves with pure white buds still surrounded by their protective sheaths. Although still a beautiful flower, for me it had lost some of its magic, not being able to live up to one of its more vivid local names — the "snow piercer". It seldom has competition from other plants in the normally drab days of January, but this year it was having to share its space on the woodland floor with dogs-mercury, lesser celandine and primrose, all well ahead of their usual March appearance. I allowed myself one further distraction, which was to watch four male blackbirds, two magpies, a pair of mistle thrushes and a jay, mobbing a tawny owl they had discovered roosting in a tall spruce tree — other than an occasional turn of the head, the owl did not seem to be unduly concerned. When I reached the spurge laurel, I found the small green flowers fully open, clustered among the shrub's upper leaves, where they would bloom until the arrival of the first pollinating bees of the year.
J M THOMPSON

Diary

Matthew Norman

WITH this year's award just made to Ted Hughes, we take a trip down Memory Lane to the Whitbread Book Of The Year Prize of a decade ago. In 1988, having won the Booker, Salman Rushdie was hot favourite with the Satanic Verses, and he believes to this day that he would have won but for an old foe. Douglas Hurd, chairing the panel of judges, turned up late for the meeting and, with the decision all but made in Rushdie's favour, interjected: "Oh no, we can't possibly have that, we've already had enough trouble in Bradford." The prize went instead to Paul Sayer for his Comforts Of Madness. Attempts to verify this with other judges met with mixed luck. The words, "Hello, is that Mr Freud?" elicit from the adorable Sir Clement the response, "There hasn't been a Mr Freud for 12 years," and the swift replacement of his receiver. Another is more welcoming, and says this is "a fair reflection of the general tenor, although Douglas Hurd's remarks may well have been light-hearted." Perhaps this is so — but how remarkably prescient they appear 10 years on.

FROM an ancient award to one of the future, and the first nominee for February's PC Brains. He is Mark Anderson, who, while patrolling the M1, pulled over a motorist he recognised as Mike Reid, the EastEnders actor. The excitement proved too much, and, back at motorway headquarters, the duty sergeant was surprised to note that, on the fixed penalty ticket, PC Anderson had entered the name of one Frank Butcher.

THE literary world stands by for an explosive work from my friend Olga Maitland. It is a history of the landmine. Following in Diana's footsteps, Lady O is raising funds to go to Angola and Cambodia, and says she wants "to see if it is possible to put the genie back in the lamp". An intriguing departure, perhaps, from Olga's approach to other defence issues. Nevertheless a rousing defence of the landmine cannot be dismissed from the founder of Women and Families for Defence (Esher and Surbiton Chutney Makers Say Bomb the Soviets to Perdition).

WHAT the Good Lord bountifully gives to publishing with one hand, He cruelly takes away with the other: Terry Major-Ball is not, as a so-called rival reports, collaborating on a book with his brother. However, he still contemplates a solo work on the nature of women. "I meet a great deal of ladies these days, many of them amusing and beautiful," Terry explains. "Take Jilly Cooper" (ah, the spirit of Max Miller). "The first time I met Jilly, she gave me an enormous hug, and I disappeared into all that hair. I imagine," says Terry, dreamily, "that's what it would be like if you stepped out of a plane into that fluffy kind of cloud . . . cumulus, I think it's called." It is, and upon this meteorological note we say our farewells.

FROM the Erectile Dysfunction Clinic of the Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, comes advice for those suffering from Priapism. Should detumescence have failed to occur after four hours, Sister Gill Peck counsels the following: 1) Walk up and down stairs; 2) Take two teaspoons of Sudafed cough syrup; 3) If the problem persists, lie flat on the floor and cycle with legs in the air, while applying a small, fabric-covered bag of frozen peas to the affected area; 4) Apply for a Green Card and become President of the USA. 4) was just my topical joke. In truth, if 3) doesn't sort it, call 999 and pray your sense of humour survives the trip to casualty.

SKYPORT, the airport staff bulletin, reports a setback for a woman once sitting on a fortune. "Customs officers arrested a woman at Bogota airport," it reports, "after becoming suspicious of her unusually large buttocks." Closer inspection revealed 8lbs of heroin surgically implanted into the cheeks of her backside.



Bill and Tony's big adventure

Commentary

Hugo Young

TONY Blair is Bill Clinton's *friend*. Beyond the 67 per cent of Americans who still think the president is doing a fine job, he's one of his only global friends. When he goes to Washington tomorrow, a fulsome reception awaits. No British prime minister has been closeted longer with a president than Blair will be with Clinton, though any deficiency by Margaret Thatcher in that respect can only have been due to Ronald Reagan's attention-span. For Clinton, in his predicament, Blair's embrace will be part of his resurrection.

This is all very gratifying, but deeply misleading. While temporarily the bestower of a favour, Mr Blair is more chronically destined to be the acquiescent slave. The same old story, only more so. He goes as a strong domestic leader, certainly. He sweeps the president into his aura of decency and command. The photo-call will be uplifting for both of them. But what is unfolding between London and Washington shows the same submissive respect by the lesser for the stronger partner as prevailed in the Reagan-Thatcher years, highlighted now by Britain's solitary, potentially catastrophic, part in a joint venture against Iraq.

The bonding began, for Blair, in domestic concerns. He was always fascinated by how Bill Clinton turned the Democrats away from what they call liberalism. The junking of old ideology was a common task, in which Clinton led the way, as Thatcher had led Reagan in the rightist revolutions of the 1980s. The politics of spin, and the supremacy of manipulation, were other priorities in which Clinton had much to teach. All that's glitzy crossed the Atlantic from west to east, in the cause of redefining the meaning of the progressive idea.

One might add to that, Blair's natural affinities. Though less aggressively Anglo-Saxon than any predecessor, his cultural affiliations appear to be preponderantly American. He sees the US as teacher in a wider sense, as witness the presence on Concorde of Jack Straw, apparently following Michael Howard in a quest for penal lessons drawn from one of the least sophisticated penal jurisdictions in the advanced world. For all its talk about a fresh start in Europe, New Labour has shown a greater propensity to lecture than to learn from Europe in any field: another eerie echo of Mrs Thatcher.

In foreign policy, it would not be true to say that London has been completely servile. The Government has somewhat displeased Washington by its public pressure on the US to make good its huge funding debt to the United Nations. Over Bosnia, Robin Cook's notably more energetic policy on the capture of indicted war criminals not only put the Rifkind-Hurd inertia to shame but was his own initiative, goading Washington into line behind it.

But now we have Iraq. At present, Britain stands alone beside the US in mobilising forces and getting ready to bomb. No Arab state is willing openly to support this strategy, and many of the large ones, notably Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are counselling against it. There is no consensus for action in the Security Council, and, though France has shown signs of qualifying her rank hostility, both Paris and Moscow, the soft cops in this affair, are becoming very alarmed by the stance to which Washington, with Blair apparently alongside, is getting more committed by the day.

Saddam is an evil, dangerous, dreadful force at large in the Middle East, who is contemptuously defying the UN, and is developing a capacity for biological warfare that makes him, in the light of his manifest disregard for humanity, a menace to the peace of the region and the world. He's a threat which the international community has failed to deal with for seven years, whose weapon-building capacities, despite the underregarded heroism of the UN inspectors, are now in the gravest danger of being redeveloped.

Renewing the bombing, however, brings with it almost as great a danger. I write as someone who defended the invasion and bombing policy before and during the Gulf War. Then there was a coherent alliance, UN-based legitimacy, and an achievable objective. On this occasion, the consensus is absent and the war-aim is nowhere near clear enough: or, if clear, not seriously credible as a means to the stated end of getting rid of Saddam's military capacities and/or his entire regime. The history of bombing argues strenuously against any such convenient outcome. The danger of unleashing biological agents through scoring a direct hit is being openly discussed by military observers. Any secondary targets — indirect hits, with collateral civilian damage — invite one to suppose that it may be for the Iraqi people's own good that their country, and they themselves, should once again be bombarded from the West.

> Bombing will do nothing for the Iraqi people and nothing for the Middle East

That argument was used by the Foreign Office minister, Tony Lloyd, in an underreported Commons debate last week. Since Iraqis were suffering at their brutal leader's hands, he implied, any action was justified in the attempt to neuter if not extinguish him. A perverse and chilling proposition. It shows a certain desperation in government thinking, trapped as Britain is by fealty to Washington.

There's only one justification for the present build-up, and the war-talk that accompanies it. It is not negligible. The logic resembles that of nuclear deterrence: make a large enough threat, and the enemy should be induced to restrain himself. Rattling their smart missiles and talking big about their willingness to use them, Mrs Albright and her British associates are hoping to force Saddam to do what he has often done before, which is to climb down just enough to resume a political argument — the only way, short of Saddam's death, this intractable dispute, with all its hideous aspects, has a chance of being resolved.

But if deterrence fails, the policy itself will have failed. Make no mistake about it. Bombing will do nothing for weapons-inspection, nothing for the Iraqi people, and almost certainly nothing for the Middle East.

London is not unaware of this, of course. Mr Cook is picking his own words carefully, and plainly hoping to play for time with another Security Council resolution, which the US does not entirely want. The question is: what will happen if the Council remains divided, and Washington, already stoking up the war mentality, insists on military action? One would like to imagine that Mr Blair will this week use his window of Clintonian gratitude by insisting on the folly of such a course. But I'm afraid it is hard to believe. In special illusionship, there's no such thing as New Labour.

A ski race to riches

As the Winter Olympics get underway in Japan at the end of this week, **Andrew Jennings** reveals the billionaires who will benefit



AS LIVING standards collapse in the Tiger economies, three of Asia's leading billionaires will be beaming into the cameras at the end of this week at the opening of the Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. Despite the meltdown of their currencies, they are medal-winners in the new world order where sport, politics, corporatism, and cronyism collide.

Look out for Mohammed "Bob" Hasan, one of President Suharto's closest confidants. Hasan, who fronts businesses owned by the presidential family, symbolising the "crony capitalism" that brought Indonesia to its knees, is on the secretive International Olympic Committee.

One of the conditions of the *IMF's $43 billion Indonesian* bail-out is the dismantling of Hasan's plywood monopoly (Indonesia is one of the world's major suppliers). Hasan is one of the world's most active rainforest loggers: those loggers were accused of contributing to the smoke haze that settled over south-east Asia last autumn.

Hasan has just laid off 2,500 workers, but losing the plywood concession won't bankrupt him. The government recently gave him a large chunk of the country's growing cell-phone monopoly.

Indonesian reporters are jailed for seeking to expose government corruption while Hasan publishes a weekly magazine that takes a benign view of the cartels. Opponents say that when Suharto's power is eclipsed, "Hasan will be the first person to disappear off the face of the earth".

Hasan's contribution to sport consists of a round of golf every week with Suharto. He also sponsors long-distance road races with fabulous prize money. For this, Hasan will be in the front row of celebrities at the Olympic activities.

Close by will be Mr Lee Kun-Hee, chairman of Samsung, the second-largest conglomerate in South Korea. Mr Lee joined the IOC in July 1996. Five weeks later, in a Seoul courtroom, he was convicted of contributing suitcases of cash to a $1.5-billion slush fund run by two former presidents, and given a two-year suspended jail sentence.

Last autumn, as the Korean currency was about to plunge off the financial radar, Samsung pledged $40 million of sponsorship to the IOC. Lee, salary $6.5 million, is reluctant to admit blame: "I repent having not fully performed my duty to head off the economic catastrophe," was his best offer by means of an apology.

Lee and Hasan were both invited to join the IOC by its president Juan Antonio Samaranch, a 78-year-old political throwback forged in mid-century fascist Spain. Samaranch's favourite crony this fortnight in Japan will be Yoshiaki Tsutsumi (64). Before the collapse of Japan's "bubble economy", Tsutsumi was the richest man in the world. He is the principal architect and beneficiary of the Nagano Olympics.

Tsutsumi's Seibu group is said to own one-sixth of Japan's land-mass, plus railways, hotels, sport franchises, golf courses and ski resorts. He became president of Japan's national Olympic committee, and led the campaign to secure the games for Nagano. Some visiting IOC members were entertained in hot tubs by compliant geishas. In 1989, Tsutsumi arranged the donation of $20 million from leading Japanese companies to Samaranch's Olympic museum in Switzerland.

Tsutsumi-owned companies have carved dozens of ski-runs out of the mountains. Covered in snow, they'll look picturesque on TV: but anti-Olympic activists have posted pictures on the Internet showing the hills scraped clean of forests, bare slopes remodelled for skiers. The Japanese government has spent a stunning $19 billion on new venues, roads, and a new bullet train stopping conveniently where Tsutsumi owns a holiday complex.

The Olympics have become a machine, transferring wealth from the public to the private sector. The immense profits go to the accounts of the IOC. Their sponsors and TV networks also make huge gains.

Masao Ezawa stands at the other end of the machine. A 47-year-old weaver, who leads a local anti-Olympics group, Ezawa predicts tax bills of up to $40,000 for families in the Nagano region, adding: "We're impoverishing ourselves for 20 years to pay for a two-week-long event."

Andrew Jennings is the author of The New Lords of The Rings, published by Pocket Books.

My recipe for your health



Tessa Jowell

IN AN important sense, contracts are the basis of government. You work — if you're fortunate enough to do so. If you do, you pay taxes to provide the defence of our country, protection against crime, help for those in trouble. We all pay. The Government delivers.

That's the contract in areas like taxes, and benefits. But we think that this approach is one that can apply in other areas too.

In the USA, rightwing Republicans tried to codify this in their "Contract with America". In Britain, the Conservatives tried to do the same with their Citizen's Charter. Both were failures. Both were rejected by the voters. Why? Because neither were really contracts.

They tried to convince people, for whom services had been consistently and systematically either worsened or withdrawn, that they were now in the driving seat.

But if they are to carry real meaning, contracts between the people and their government have to mean more than ringing up an unmanned telephone number about cones on motorways.

We will publish, shortly, our plans to improve the health of all the people of this country and central to them will be a new contract between the people of Britain and the Government — a new contract for better health for all.

That contract will cut two ways. In the past, strategies to improve health and prevent illness have been too much about blame: people being to blame for their own poor health because they refused to heed the advice of a well-intentioned but often out-of-touch government. Or governments being to blame for trying to enact grand plans of social engineering which would somehow automatically make people healthier, without any effort on their own part.

We will move away from blame. A modern vision of better health focuses instead on opportunity, and responsibility. And all of us — individuals, families, local communities, national organisations and the Government — have a part to play in securing it.

This view, of a right to better health, coupled with a responsibility on all of us to achieve it, is at the heart of the new people's contract on health which we will set out in the green paper. It will be rigorous. It will be challenging. It will be precise. It will address people's concerns about their health. And it will offer a new way to improve them.

We will sign up to our side of the contract. Just as we are investing new money in the National Health Service, and looking for reforms of the NHS at the same time, so, too, on issues of public health will we set tough new goals for ourselves in our new contract, and look to others to play their part as well.

FOOD safety and healthy eating is an example. We all want our food to be safe to eat. Under the kind of contracts on health we envisage, the Government's role is to establish the Food Standards Agency, as we have now done. That will detail the tough targets we expect our food producers to meet.

The local role would include local workplaces providing better and more healthy food and local schools shifting towards healthier eating. The individual role would be to make the choice about what to eat — but based on information provided nationally and locally, which is clear, understandable, unbiased and accurate.

That's the kind of contract we are offering on food. That's the kind of contract we want to offer in other areas. That's the kind of contract that will work — and which will improve the health of us all.

The essence of the contract recognises that government can't do everything, any more than people acting for their own health will necessarily secure the maximum improvements in health. Progress will only be achieved by a proper recognition of the balance of responsibility that falls between government, local action and personal responsibility.

Conversely, if government fails to take action only government can take then, at worst, people's health will be jeopardised and opportunities to prevent illness lost.

Tessa Jowell is Public Health Minister.

Yellow Pages, yellow wages — in our union



Mark Steel

I AM JUST old enough to remember the days when union leaders appeared on television with their waistcoat buttons done up wrong and gravy down their tie. "With regardness to the offer we can only reconfirm that we are appalled at the levelness of unfairment contained within this offer," they would say.

The modern union leader is well dressed, an expert in camera technique, writes grammatically perfect letters to the broadsheets, and makes even less sense than before.

After the defeat of the Liverpool dockers' strike, a debate has been taking place in this paper's letters page between Bill Morris and John Pilger. Pilger blamed the defeat on the TGWU's "craven silence", and Morris replied with "Why does Mr Pilger always reserve his venom for workers' own organisations?". But Pilger's most famous campaign was to expose the atrocities of Pol Pot. Perhaps Morris has got Pol Pot mixed up with someone else, and thinks that instead of being leader of the Khmer Rouge he was North-east regional secretary of the GMBU.

Morris also writes that Pilger wanted an excuse to "renew his vendetta against the Transport and General Worker's Union". In which case Pilger, who has spent over two years campaigning for sacked TGWU dockers, is pretty useless at vendettas. He would be no good in the Mafia, with Sonny Corleone forever taking him to one side and asking: "John, why are you raising money for the Tatallia family's Christmas automatic handgun appeal?" With Pilger replying: "Purely business Sonny. It's part of my vendetta against them."

Morris then blames "John Pilger and others like him" for giving the dockers "false hope" by claiming they could win.

So to lead a successful campaign you must always tell people they haven't a prayer. If Bill Morris had been at Agincourt his stirring speech would have been, "I wouldn't bother going unto that breach boys, have you seen the size of some of them French? Anyway its against the law to flare your nostrils."

It would be marvellous if Bill spread this message of despair to everyone else he met. Because on a £70,000 salary, recently installed on the board of the Bank of England, and nicely placed at the Queen and Prince Philip's golden wedding banquet between Lieutenant Commander J Beavis and Sir Paul Condon, in a matter of weeks he could have had Britain's rulers deciding there is no point in getting up in the morning, and handing over power to a vegetarian co-op in Hackney.

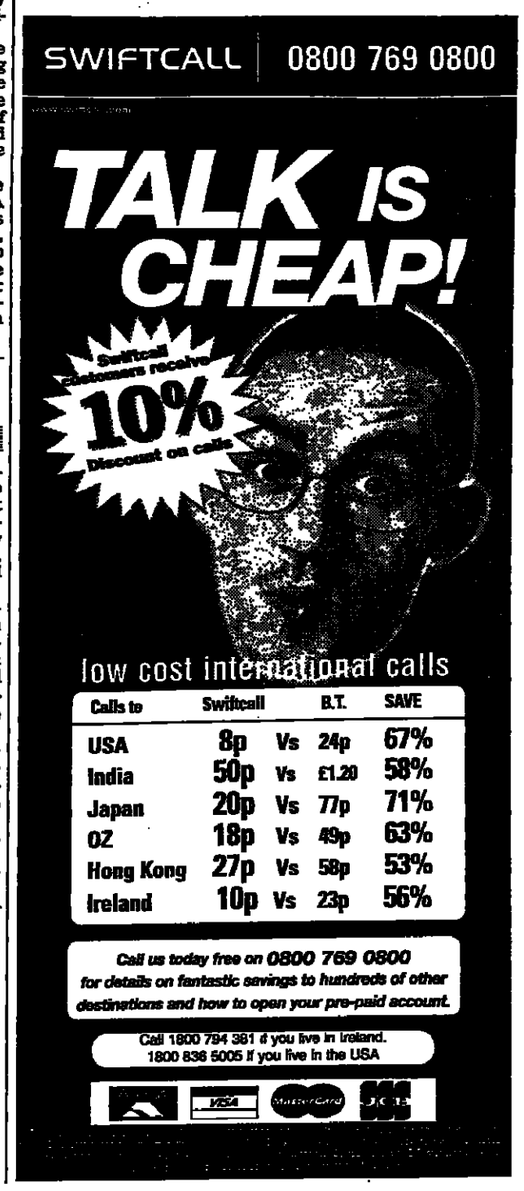
With almost any strike being against the law, backing the dockers, it is argued, would have been playing into the employers' hands. This is the "Don't fight back, that's what they want you to do" theory of history. For example, during the German occupation of France, when some went off to organise the French resistance, and others said: "Don't ambush them, blow up their tanks and shoot the Kommandant. That's exactly what they want you to do."

Union leaders ponder how to stop the decline in union membership, and produce insurance schemes and credit cards to attract members. The trouble is you can get these things anyway with the help of Yellow Pages, but if your union cannot defend you against a ruthless employer there is no point in ringing Direct Line instead. As far as I know there is no part of their recorded message that goes: "If you'd like to set up a picket line press six."

So the greatest example of union recruitment in recent times is the 11 million Poles who joined Solidarnosc in three months in 1981. Bill Morris probably thinks: "Lech Walesa must have been offering a bloody good deal on holiday insurance."

UNIONS depend on the principle of standing up for one another instead of just for yourself. Five hundred ex-dockers, many of whom were nearing retirement and could have opted for an easy life, sacrificed a tremendous amount for that principle, and will be remembered with great affection by the many people they touched. Just as everyone knows about the slave who said, "I am Spartacus"; but no one ever remembered the one who said, "It's him, this one here, fourth from the left. After all we can't break the law. But tell the Senate I'm willing to reach a negotiated settlement."

Early on in the dispute, Morris made a speech to the dockers which won him a standing ovation, in which he told of how he'd be proud to tell his grandchildren of his role in the dispute. Well that's going to lead to some pretty confused grandchildren. "Mummy," they'll say, "this afternoon Grandad put us on his knee and said, 'Are you sitting comfortably? Well let me tell you about my proudest battle. Two and a half years it went on, and in all that time not once did I spread an ounce of false hope'."



Mario Schifano

Images of Italy's Warhol



MARIO Schifano, the "Italian Warhol" who has died of a heart attack aged 63, was one of the most audacious Italian artists of his generation. Born in Homs, Libya, he grew up in Rome, where he spent most of his life. He worked briefly with his father as a restorer at the Museo Etrusco in the Villa Giulia, before taking up painting, initially in an expressive abstract style, which characterised his first exhibition in 1959.

The freedom with which he handled paint at this time remained a dominant feature of his career, even after he became involved in the invention of Italian pop art. He began to attract attention in 1960 as one of the *5 Pittori Romani '60*, who also included Tano Festa and Franco Angeli.

Like Jasper Johns and the American pop artists, he was particularly interested in exploring the relationship between art and other forms of imagery. His early works often incorporated bold blocks of colour and writing, evoking the symbolism of traffic signs and advertising, while always clearly emphasising the drips of paint and irregular outlines with which they were made. In 1962, for example, he drowned the unmistakable calligraphy of the *Coca-Cola logo in a field of* fluid green (rather than red) paint. Such enigmatic celebrations of American popular culture brilliantly captured the atmosphere of *Dolce Vita Italy, and were eminently* exportable.

Schifano's first exhibition in New York, as one of the "New Realists" at the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1962, began a period of great international success, both artistically and socially. He was linked in particular with the actress Anita Pallenberg, a friend of the Rolling Stones, and gained a well-deserved reputation for high living. However, his progress was abruptly interrupted in 1966, when he was accused of handling 50 grammes of marijuana found in the possession of a Venetian noblewoman: not even the eloquent testimony of his friend Alberto Moravia was able to save him from gaol.

Although this conviction was recently quashed, Schifano's own dependence on *drugs, of various kinds*, was never a secret, and inevitably affected his health and *productivity*.

Despite his personal difficulties, Schifano maintained *throughout his career a per*ceptive critique of high and low culture. His fascination with Americana — which included a taste for its cars — did not prevent him from analysing his own country's heritage. Characteristically, he played with the significance and cultural associations of great artistic icons by reworking the compositions of figures as varied as Leonardo da Vinci, the Futurists and Giorgio De Chirico. *In* 1972 for example, he transformed De Chirico's dark, portentous *Melancholy* (1912) into a brilliant combination of vivid pinks, reds, blues and yellows. *Schifano based his* own works on photographic projections of the original *image, over which he applied* quick-drying liquid nitro paints with nonchalance and speed.

Schifano's most ironic artistic tribute was his version, *made in 1966, of the Futurists'* famous group photograph, in which the great iconoclasts *were themselves subjected to* iconographic analysis, their formidable figures converted into a line of blurred yet instantly recognisable silhouettes. *Schifano's admiration* for the Futurists also involved a desire to represent movement *in his own compo*sitions, while *Satellite*, a film that he created in 1968, emphasised his *concept of the* world as being permanently in flux, an experience to *which the Futurists could* doubtless have related.

Despite this foray into film-*making, Schifano's interest in* cinema and television was expressed primarily through his painting. In 1970 he created a series of works imitating the outline of a television screen, which presented, in exaggerated form, the distortions of an electronic image. These effects were combined with quintessentially mod*ern, televisual subjects. In* one case we seem to be looking through a car windscreen *at a highway dominated by its* road markings. Again the signs and symbols of the 20th *century recur in their most* banal, stereotyped manifestations, but transformed by *Schifano's characteristically* brilliant hues and vigorous brushwork.

Although Schifano's style was always painterly, it was not without variation. In his *early work he often used only* one or two colours, contrasted with the plain background around them, while later on, as well as widening his palette, he applied the pigment in dense layers, concealing the drawing beneath. *On occasion he mixed other materi*als with the paint, as when he added sand in order to simu*late the concrete Bauhaus Ar*chive in the *Berlin-Projekt* series of cityscapes (1988).

*Inevitably, Schifano's inim*itable gestural style recalls the bravura and energy of *abstract expressionism*. His passion for the act of painting, and his communication *of this to his viewers*, was most spectacularly displayed in the enormous *Chimera* (1989), *which was created as a* performance in a large Florentine square.

Remarkably, this work, which consisted of 10 panels, each two metres square, was completed in a single evening, albeit with a team of assistants. Its enigmatic mythological subject, so typical of Italian art at this time, marked a *departure from Schifano's* normal themes, but its silhouetted forms and swathes of *vivid colour were unmistak*eably his own.

Schifano was an artist of *enormous flair, but his broad* interests at times led him away from painting. He once *joined a commune out of de*spair for the social utility of art, and he threw himself into *life outside his studio with* the same energy that appears in his work. A warm man, he was, as Corrado Levi wrote, "easy-going with people ... grateful for any kindness he gets, always responsive with true feelings, even though his wits are never blunted by affection. He is open to suggestions, ready to change if someone suggests something else, steady in his ideas, yet flexible, open to engulf other people's desires, to make them also his." It is these qualities, combined with a thoughtful, penetrating mind, that made his art communicate so successfully with his public over nearly four decades. He is survived by a son.

Christopher Masters

Mario Schifano, artist, born September 20, 1934; died January 26, 1998



Delight in reconstruction ... Mario Schifano (above left) and his photographic homage *Futurismo revisitato a colori*, 1965

Rt Rev Alastair Haggart

Rigorous, reticent, but righteous

THE Right Rev Alastair Haggart, former Bishop of Edinburgh and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, who has *died aged 83, had a vitality*, wit and courage which many half his age might envy and leaves Britain's ecclesiastical landscape impoverished.

On the night in mid-December when he had the stroke which led to his death, he had spoken with passion *at a theological forum on the* Christmas story.

With pride he recalled a *Christmas Eve when he had* climbed Dundee Law, the highest hill in the city, with his seven-year-old daughter. "Daddy," she had said, "How would you say what house a star was over?"

The tough, energetic force of such questions was one of Alastair's motivating delights. It explained his anger at the intellectual and moral sloth of priests and ministers who would not risk being truthful with their congregations, and who denied to their people the theological adulthood they themselves had been given access to in their training.

As pastor, as theological educator, as bishop, as Primus, as ecumenical pioneer in the United Kingdom, this gritty integrity was the hallmark of everything he did.

Students found him tough. One, now the youngest bishop in the Anglican church in Canada, had running battles with Alastair, was regarded by him as an "*intelligent delinquent*", and yet, like the Syro-Phoenical woman with Jesus, probably *moved him to new ground*.

Certainly, both in Scotland, and in the context of *the British Council of* Churches, Alastair embodied the denial of T S Eliot's *Four Quartets* bird, that humankind couldn't bear reality.

He insisted on making con*nections: between scholar*ship and pastoral care; between preaching and *reading; between experience* and judgment; between politics and the kingdom of God.

The students from Coates Hall during his time as Principal of the "Piskie" Theological College were conspicuously marvellous: motivated; culturally literate; interested in how psychology, physics, sociology linked to the traditional disciplines of theological study. That was no mere coincidence: it was required awareness.

As chairman of the division of ecumenical affairs in the British Council of Churches, he was one of those who forged the high-risk shift to the new ecumenical structures in Britain, in which the Roman Catholic church could be full participants.

In the steering group of the "inter-church process" he toiled valiantly, with colleagues like Philip Morgan and Colin Davey, to articulate the denominations' need of one another, the nonsense of separation. He drafted the seminal introduction to the Swanwick Declaration, when the churches agreed to ratify the "Not Strangers but Pilgrims" process, in the "Marigold Book" — *Churches Together in Pilgrimage*.

"This requires a shift in the thinking, feeling and action of our churches, from ecumenism as an extra which absorbs energy, to ecumenism as a dimension of all we do, which releases energy through the sharing of resources.

"This will also need to be a self-conscious act of self-denial by the churches, so that when new work is proposed, in every department of church life, local, intermediate or national, each does not simply go ahead as if no one else existed."

One of Alastair Haggart's disappointments was that recent church life in Britain had not sustained that commitment: that press and radio constantly approached the Archbishop of Canterbury or Cardinal Hume, or the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, but rarely John Reardon, the General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland. Nor did the church leaders who signed the Swanwick Declaration protest.

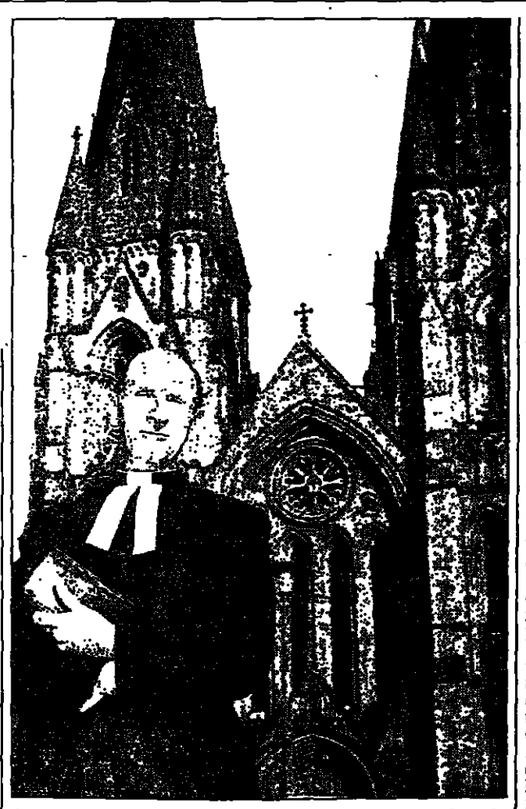
One public sadness must be that a man who crafted skilled and subtle sermons, who was full of witty and wonderful anecdotes and *who inspired hundreds of* students, many of them now in key positions in the Anglican communion, never published. That, perhaps, is its *own tribute to the gifts of a* man who has gone into people rather than into print.

His wit, astringency and truthfulness have enriched Scottish church life for decades, and have been recognised by the whole Anglican Communion, given his role in the 1988 Lambeth Conference, his contribution to the life of the Episcopal Church in the US, and his huge pastoral, intellectual and personal links across the world.

He also, in a Scottish idiom, undemonstrative and reticent, has known how to love; Peggy, his first wife who died in 1983 and Mary who survives him with his daughters by Peggy; his students; his clergy; and the huge circle of people who will miss his presence, but have been changed by his life.

Elizabeth Templeton

Right Rev Alastair Haggart, Primus and bishop, born October 10, 1915; died January 11, 1998



Awareness and astringency ... the Rt Rev Alastair Haggart, a great preacher, had a fund of witty anecdotes

> 'This requires a shift in thinking ... to ecumenism as a dimension of all we do'

Kenneth Loveland

Words and music



Kenneth Loveland ... always an honest appraisal

THE sight of journalist Kenneth Loveland, who *has died aged 82, hold*ing forth at the New Theatre in Cardiff was often as enter*taining as the events on stage* there, the home of Welsh National Opera.

The birth and unsteady late 1940s infancy of the WNO almost coincided with his *arrival in Wales from his na*tive Kent to join the *South Wales Argus*. He charted the *opera's progress, encouraged* its musicians and criticised it witheringly on occasions, *whenever he felt that produc*ers had exceeded their briefs. It was a measure of his stand*ing as a professional that the* company took notice of the opprobrium as well as the *praise*.

When Loveland took over as editor of the *Argus* in 1951, almost nothing was written outside Wales about the principality's musical creativity. *He came to an arrangement* with the paper which allowed him to travel extensively in pursuit of music, especially that made by fledgling Welsh musicians away from home. Many — like Dame Gwyneth Jones, Sir Geraint Evans, and composers Alun Hoddinott and William Mathias — remained lifelong friends.

He edited the *Argus* until 1970, but continued as music critic on what was probably the only regional paper publishing 2,000-word articles on the Salzburg Festival. That was a mark of the authority and the prestige he had established.

Loveland was born on the Isle of Sheppey. His childhood musical education had consisted of racing home from *school to listen to concerts on* the wireless. He worked on local papers before and after *army war service*. Early in his career, he freelanced for the national press while hold*ing down his job in Newport*. There were tales of Valleys choral concerts where he *would recall to earnest band*masters recent meetings with Herbert von Karajan in *Berlin*.

But when he said he knew a celebrated musician, he *meant it and for him music* was a serious business, too. He received a string of domestic and *foreign awards, in*cluding a presentation from the Italian president and, *from Prince Charles, an hon*orary degree from the University of Wales.

It was typical of Loveland that he should fly back from a major European music festival one day and drive out the next to some modest event in the Gwent countryside, where his presence was almost *de rigueur*. One of these was the Llantilio Crossenny Festival at St Teilo's Church, near Abergavenny. He was captivated by its setting and had long "booked" a plot in its churchyard. He is survived by his devoted wife, Anne.

Nigel Jarrett

Kenneth Loveland, journalist, born October 12, 1915; died January 25, 1998

Birthdays

Maev Alexander, actress, 50; **Gillian Ayres**, painter, 68; **Shelley Berman**, comedian, 72; **Michael Dickinson**, racehorse trainer, 48; **Val Doonican**, singer, 69; **Tim Flowers**, footballer, 31; **Prof Stuart Hall**, radical sociologist and broadcaster, 66; **Gavin Henderson**, principal, Trinity College of Music, 50; **Jeremy Kemp**, actor, 63; **Baroness (Detta) O'Cathain**, *former* director, Barbican Centre, 60; **Elaine Padmore**, director, *Danish Royal Opera, 51*; **Brig Dame Mary Pihl**, former director, WRAC, 82; **Glen Tetley**, *ballet choreographer*, 72; **Frankie Vaughan**, singer, 70.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN YESTERDAY's paper (February 2), we reported that *Alan Duncan MP* was involved in a Conservative Party briefing concerning the *late wife of John Reid MP*. We now accept that this is untrue and apologise unreservedly to *Mr Duncan*.

WE FAILED to incorporate a *late amendment* into John Brice's letter about speed enforcement cameras in last week's *Notes and Queries* (January 26). This should have said that marks on the *road continue* for 25 metres, not 10 metres. The resulting calculation is that motorists must drive at 28,000mph to escape detection.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 9589 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk.

Death Notices

BORLAND. Marie, on January 30th 1998, peacefully in her sleep and of Prestwich, Manchester. Dearly loved sister of Margaret and the late Joan McGregor. Dear aunt of Rory, Alex and Fiona and loving great aunt of Frances, Robert and Rory. Requiem Mass at the Servite Church, Kersal on Friday February 6th at 10.00am, followed by interment at Agecroft Cemetery at 11.00am. Enquiries to Lilleywhite Funeral Service. Tel. 0161 773 2749.

CLARKE – Stella, aged 75 on 31/1/98. Beloved wife of the late Stanley and dear Mother of Rosemund, Anthony, David, Muriel (deceased) and much loved grandmother of Rebecca, Helen, Hannah and Kelly. Funeral, Friday 6th at 2pm, Hansdon Church. Family flowers only please. Donations to Save the Children Fund and Arthritis and Rheumatism Council for Research.

CRAWSHAW, Shaw, on Thursday 29th January. Wonderful husband to Eileen, and dad to Sheila, Angela, Mike & Terry. Loved by his many grandchildren, relatives & friends. Lifelong worker for others through the trades union movement (GMBTU), the Labour Party ("old") and in all aspects of his life. Funeral on Thursday 5th February at St. Peter & Pauls Church, Eccles, Manchester at 10.00 am. Family flowers only. Donations to CAFOD.

In Memoriam

HUMPSTON. Walter Bernard, died York 3/2/86. Remembered this day and every day. DJ and M.

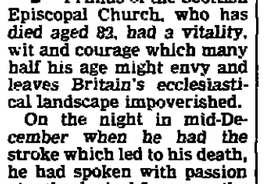
MORRIS. Terry, died 10 years ago today. Still greatly missed.

Births

STEVENS. To Jane and Jonathan a son, Ifor Oscar, born 19.01.98. Many thanks to the excellent staff at Llandough Hospital, Cardiff.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4123 between 8am and 3pm Mon-Fri.

Jackdaw



Base is best

BASE is an acronym for building, antenna, span and earth. "Based" buildings in the UK include the Hilton hotel and the Canary Wharf tower. Electricity pylons and aerials come under the term antenna, whilst span means bridges. Finally, earth relates to cliffs. Gary Connery has jumped off all four types.

Still a highly experimental pastime, the sport provides a new and stiff challenge to experienced skydivers who, rightly, view opening their chutes from 100 feet above the ground to be a harder task than from a few thousand feet from an aircraft. Although illegal in the US, it is a more popular and better organised sport there than in Europe, where base jumpers remain a secretive and elusive band of brothers.

"I've done a lot of extreme sports, but nothing gives me the same high as base jumping," insists Gary. "I know that a lot of people think that what I do is insane. I see it as my profession and I sometimes question the sanity of people who never try to experience life. Base jumpers are any thing but crazed characters. Can you imagine the consequences if I were in a crazy mind waiting to jump? Believe me, you need a clear mind, body and soul, in order to carry out the deed in a correct fashion. It is down to one's ability to remain calm when it really counts.

"During the moments before jumping, the mind asks a lot of questions about yourself, questions that only those who place themselves in extreme conditions can fully answer. Then an icy calmness comes over you, so calm that you wouldn't even hear a bomb explode beside you. Then you are ready ...

"Nothing comes close to that feeling when you are in mid-air, when you have made the choice and when, on landing, you realise you have overcome your fear and succeeded in overcoming the huge mental challenge the situation has presented you with. That's why the adrenalin rush is so much bigger than with anything else I have attempted. That's why I do it."

Jumping for joy, Base jumping in Adrenalin.

Vital statistics

105 is the number of knickers Charles Dupon, 52, stole from his neighbours, over 16 years.

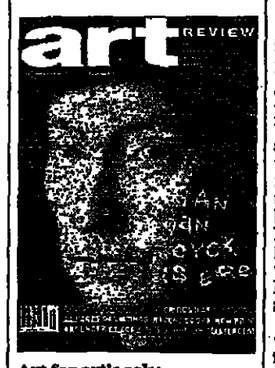
300,000 is the amount in pounds that Twycross Zoo is spending on a new play-area for three gorillas which will include, among other things, a colour TV.

1,775 is the amount in dollars two actors were paid for being locked inside a cage to live like chickens for a week. The arty Canadian film, *Chicken Men*, is due for release some time in 1998. *From More!*

Shorts change

HAVING fun with art can be not only fun, but healthy. What matters, first, is that the joke/object doesn't assume undue significance or get ideas above its station; and, second, that the joke is a good one, although it is only ever good once, and is not susceptible — unlike great art — to visitations or (re-visitations).

I think it is possible to wear the Michelangelo shorts and still uphold a belief in the transcendence of great art. I don't think wearing them necessarily exposes our values (the matter of what else it exposes is purely a design question); nevertheless, how would it affect us if we were told that, say, the Director of the National Gallery wore them? That would rather fly in the face of propriety — talk about the enemy within (the gallery rather than the shorts). The climate in which Michelangelo boxer shorts stand out as an icon of design is coming to an end as we rediscover, without shame or guilt, great art. The attitude/sensibility/theory conditions which give rise to the shorts will, in the fullness of time, be washed up, over and out. Their time is running out: they will soon be indistinguishable from pants of exhaustion. The old latinism *ars longa, vita brevis* sums it up: roughly translated, it is that art has a long life, but shorts have a limited lifespan. *Art Review gets its knickers in a twist.*



Art for art's sake ...

Sport & thought

CLAUDIO TAMBURRINI, a former professional soccer player in Argentina, is a *sports philosopher at Gothen*burg University in Sweden:

Q: What's a typical sports philosophy problem?

A: One is the so-called logical inconsistency thesis. It says that when a player violates a rule, he or she ceases to play a game because it is definitionally impossible to play a game and at the same time violate its rules. I disagree. If you violate a constitutive rule of a game — for instance, if you start kicking the ball when you are playing basketball — then you are no longer playing basketball. But it is perfectly possible to violate an auxiliary rule — like fouling in basketball — and still play the game.

Q: Let's try some real-world applications. Is it OK for pros to play ice hockey in the Winter Olympics?

A: Yes. Elite amateur sports is now a profession. There's no need for a distinction that no longer exists in reality.

Q: Ballroom dancing was recently recognised by the International Olympic Committee. Is that a sport?

A: It meets the conditions. I define a sport as a game involving predominantly physical skills that is widely practised over a long period of time.

Q: Billiards was also recognised. Sport?

A: There, the standard of physical activity is a problem.

Q: So?

A: It's a thorny matter about billiards.

New York Times magazine proving that Eric Cantona is not the only sports philosopher.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk.; fax 0171-713 4366; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Hannah Pool

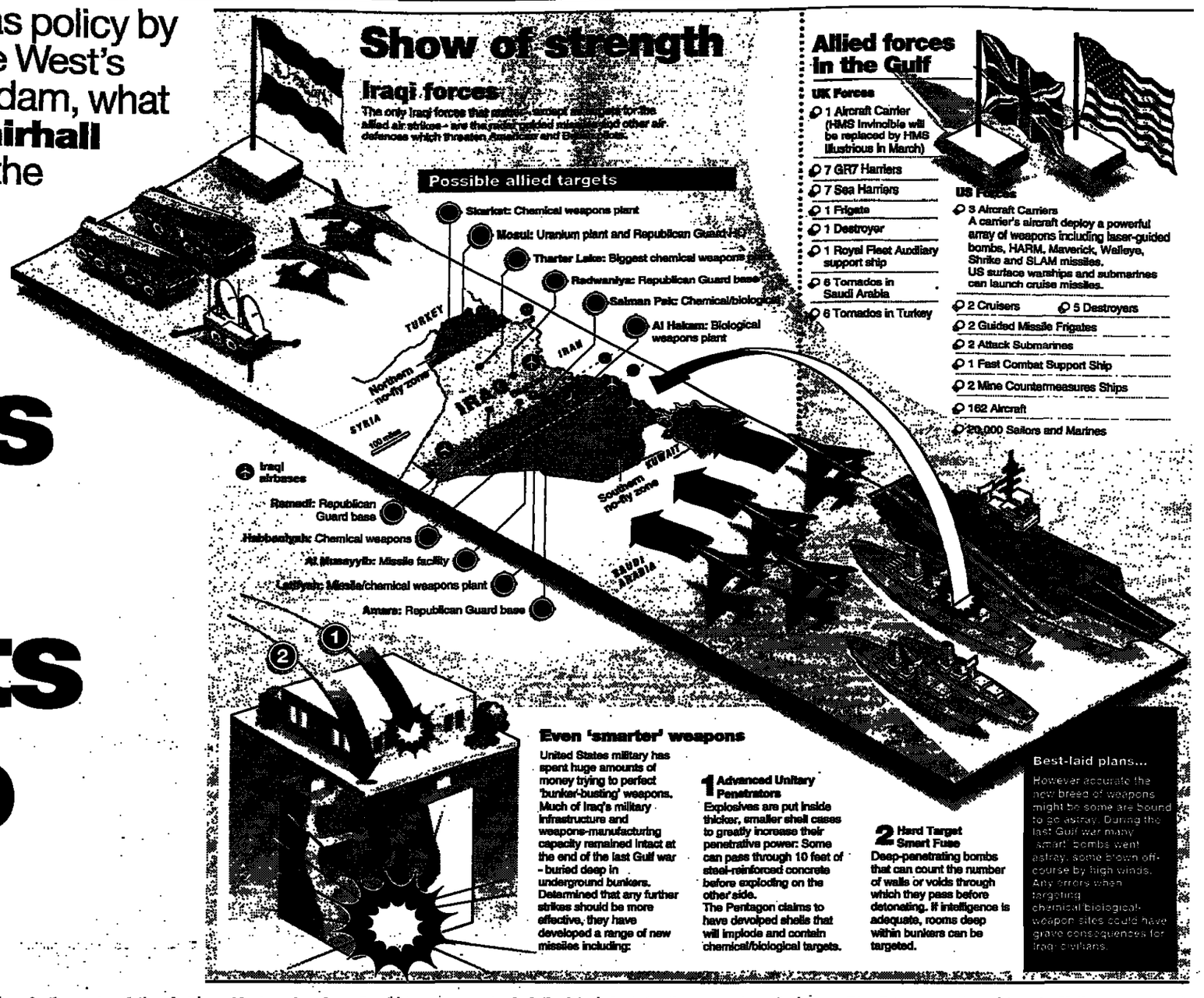
Analysis
The Gulf crisis



The special illusionship 9

War has been defined as policy by other means. But, in the West's brinkmanship with Saddam, what is the policy? **David Fairhall** and **Ian Black** outline the options

War games with targets but no aims



THE military objective least likely to be achievable by the air strikes Washington and London have in mind is the direct elimination of Saddam Hussein's remaining weapons of mass destruction — well concealed drums of VX nerve gas or bottles of deadly anthrax spores. What is more or less certain, however, is that air strikes will put an end to a United Nations inspection programme that has successfully rooted out the larger part of that weapons programme, particularly the nuclear facilities.

The rationale for military action therefore depends on broader objectives that can more reliably be achieved, plus the desperate hope that somehow they will trigger Saddam's downfall.

Three main kinds of target are likely to be involved:

- those bearing at least indirectly on Iraq's residual capability for mass destruction, such as chemical works and and biological laboratories;
- the reconstructed air defence radars and missile batteries which hinder routine operations like American U2 reconnaissance flights;
- prestigious military installations like Republican Guard headquarters which help to bolster Saddam's standing within his ruthless military regime.

For air attacks to make sense — unless by some brilliant stroke of military intelligence, or simple chance, a bomb was landed on the bunker where Saddam was hiding — their impact must outweigh both the damage done to the UN control regime and the political backlash that will be felt from other Gulf states when more of their fellow arabs fall innocent victim to the inevitable "collateral damage". Beyond that, the strikes should at least bring the Iraqi dictator's downfall nearer.

This is an extremely tall order, even if the Americans have developed some clever new bunker-busting bombs.

There is no evidence, admittedly, that either the Pentagon or the Ministry of Defence have positively advised against renewed air strikes. Some of the US commanders will surely relish another chance to show what their hi-tech weaponry can do. But military analysts admit that the case for strikes is nowhere near as strong as it was when cruise missiles could still be launched at large, easily identifiable chunks of Saddam's nuclear programme.

So when Clinton and Blair say for the umpteenth time that military action will only be used as a last resort, they probably mean it. Their brinkmanship contains a large element of calculated military bluster and political desperation.

Neither government has declared any aim except to force Saddam to comply with UN weapons inspections. "We're not in the business of overthrowing Saddam Hussein — that will be the job for his people," the defence secretary, George Robertson said on Sunday. Exactly how he did not explain.

While public attention has deliberately been focussed on the allies' military preparations, surprisingly little thought seems to have been given to the likely political effect of new air strikes on one of the world's most brutal and impenetrable regimes.

Yet Iraqi opposition groups, Middle East analysts, and some government officials, all warn this that is a mistake likely to lead to a re-run of what happened in 1991: a powerful but incomplete military blow followed by the re-consolidation in power of a vengeful and dangerous Saddam.

"Without a political plan to remove Saddam's regime military strikes will be counter-productive," Ahmed Chalabi, president of the Iraqi National Congress, the largest opposition group," argued yesterday. "Military action alone will not remove Saddam. It will not remove the weapons of mass destruction. It will not solve the immediate problem. It will also give him an excuse to throw out Unscom (the United Nations Inspectors). Thousands of Iraqis will die. Saddam will make sure they will, so he can get sympathy."

EVEN supporters of selective attacks say they must avoid hitting Iraq's infrastructure, roads, bridges, hospitals and schools — anything that will make life harder for the mass of ordinary people suffering under the burden of six years of punitive sanctions.

The Republican Guard apart, it may be sensible to avoid hitting the regular army, said to contain many potential anti-Saddam forces. Only last month, opposition sources reported yesterday, brigadiers from air defence and chemical warfare units joined the ranks of defectors.

In a brutal regime like Iraq, no open opposition is possible. Executions, arrests and torture are part of daily life, informers are everywhere.

"People know that if they take action and they're wrong they are going to get butchered," said one expert. "The problem from an opposition point of view is that people would only climb onto the bandwagon once they are sure it's going to run Saddam over."

Abroad, exiled groups are divided and weak. The two main Kurdish factions in the north are at loggerheads, vying for Saddam's favours, their CIA links exposed and their territory useless as a base for anti-regime operations.

But Saddam's enemies are united on one vital point conspicuously ignored by the US and Britain: that explicit support for overthrowing the Iraqi leader is the only key that would unlock the door to wider resistance.

Other specific ideas for encouraging Iraqis include:

- declaring Saddam a war criminal;
- recognising a provisional Iraqi government formed by the Iraqi opposition;
- unfreezing hundreds of millions of dollars of Iraqi assets abroad.

Restricting Saddam's forces by setting up a "no-drive zone" — a ground equivalent to the current no-fly zones — or extending the flight ban to cover the entire country.

"Everyone says Saddam is boxed in," said Dr Chalabi. "But it is the Americans and British who are boxed in by their refusal to support the idea of political change in Iraq. The consequences of that are disastrous. People should read Clausewitz. War is policy by other means. But what is the policy here?"

As the military await a political decision, they are fine-tuning their contingency plans. In these days of digital satellite communications this can be co-ordinated from a remote US command centre in Tampa, Florida, and on the British side, from the deep bunker at Northwood, near London, which houses our permanent joint force headquarters.

The earliest date for the onset of hostilities is still a week or two away. The final planning cycle for a complex series of air strike "packages" would normally take 72 hours, and many diplomatic clearances must first be obtained. Much of the allied air forces (including the RAF's Tornado reconnaissance bombers) are currently based in Saudi Arabia, but given Riyadh's reservations, they may have to be moved to Kuwait before they can go into action.

The main reason both the US and Britain decided to deploy aircraft carriers in the Gulf — in our case by rushing HMS Invincible back across the Atlantic — is that raids can if necessary be launched without obtaining anybody else's permission, a point that will not have been lost on Saddam.

IF LONDON finally approves the strikes, our aircraft will be placed under the tactical control of the local US commander. But the British chain of command will retain an ultimate veto over the choice of targets, and the way its own aircraft are employed, just as it did on the Gulf war. The British government could change its mind "right up to the eleventh hour", a senior military source emphasised yesterday.

In a further move to enhance Britain's freedom of manoeuvre, additional, hurriedly purchased laser guidance pods were being rushed out to the Gulf at the weekend to equip the RAF GR7 Harriers aboard Invincible, so they can bomb without relying on US aircraft to illuminate their targets. If the wrong targets are hit, or innocent civilians killed, there will be no embarrassing arguments about which nation was responsible.

These infra-red "Tiald" guidance pods are already available to the RAF Tornados patrolling the Iraqi no-fly-zone from Al-Kharg, the Saudi airfield near Riyadh where most of the US Air Force aircraft are also based. To begin with the pods were used for medium level-reconnaissance, where there was a rare gap in the US inventory.

Good quality tactical air reconnaissance is still just about the only military capability Britain can offer the United States which its own forces could not provide as well or better.

The hard fact is that in this campaign, the loyal Brits are politically valuable but militarily irrelevant.

Graphics sources: United States Central Command; Ministry of Defence; the US Eglin Air Force Base, Florida; The Military Balance 1996/7.
Graphics: Paddy Allen; Steve Villiers.
Research: Mark Espiner
David Fairhall is the Guardian's defence correspondent; Ian Black is our diplomatic editor.

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FinanceGuardian

Motor firms in double jobs boost



Tony Blair, flanked by Margaret Beckett and Nick Scheele, Jaguar's chairman, yesterday confirm that Halewood has been saved PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN DEMPSEY

Nicholas Bannister, Chief Business Correspondent

BRITAIN'S motor industry received a double boost yesterday when Land Rover announced the creation of 1,200 jobs in its dealership network and Ford confirmed it would make its baby Jaguar sports car at Halewood, securing at least 2,900 jobs at the Merseyside plant.

Land Rover dealers are spending £122 million setting up 12 sales centres and improving facilities at the 123 existing ones. Some of the additional staff are needed to handle sales of the recently-launched Freelander model. Land Rover, which sold 127,000 vehicles last year, is expecting to sell 60,000 Freelanders this year.

The company, part of BMW's Rover subsidiary, is also understood to be gearing up to launch a new version of its Discovery model later this year.

Rover last month announced the creation of 400 jobs at its Land Rover plant in Solihull, partly to allow round-the-clock production of the Freelander.

News of the Land Rover expansion came as Tony Blair confirmed that the Government had agreed to grant £43 million to Jaguar, which is planning to produce its new X400 sports car at the Ford plant at Halewood.

Margaret Beckett, the Trade and Industry Secretary, said the grant ensured that the new car would be built in Britain. Ford, which owns Jaguar, had threatened to build the car at one of its German or American plants unless it got adequate government funding. Jaguar's chairman, Nick Scheele, said the money was needed to cover the cost of converting Halewood to handle luxury car production.

Halewood is currently making the old Escort, production of which is due to be phased out.

Early designs for the X400 are said to be reminiscent of the Jaguar Mk 2, but the final version is unlikely to go on show until 2001, shortly before it goes on sale.

Mr Scheele said initial production would be about 100,000 a year, creating about £380 million a year of business for British component suppliers.

● In an unexpected about-turn, the Government is to contribute £123 million towards British Aerospace's development costs for two new Airbuses, following lobbying from the company.

The deal will secure 2,000 jobs at the group's plants at Filton, near Bristol, and Chester.

The money is being provided as launch aid — repayable with interest and additional payments if the aircraft are a success, but at risk if the project flops. It will go towards developing wings for new versions of the four-engined Airbus A340, which will compete with the Boeing 777.

Bid fever lifts FTSE £25bn

THE BIG MERGER

Glaxo SB

Ian King

LONDON'S stock market blasted to a new high for the fourth time in as many days yesterday as news of the planned record-breaking £117 billion merger between Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham fuelled speculation of more corporate action.

As executives from both companies prepared to meet union representatives today over speculation that 10,000 jobs will be lost if the merger goes ahead, global markets were alive with the prospect of futher takeovers in the drugs, banking, insurance and telecoms sectors.

The boards of Glaxo and SmithKline are expected to start detailed talks today in what some analysts predict could be a drive to cut costs at the combined group by up to £1.5 billion a year.

Financial advisers to the two sides were locked in talks all yesterday as senior managers attempted to reassure employees about the scale of job losses and site closures.

The market needed no such comfort, however, and the planned merger saw the FTSE 100 index of Britain's biggest companies jump by more than 145 points in the first few minutes of trading, smashing through the 5600 mark at one point, before ending a busy session up 140.5 points at 5599.0.

The move, which means the index is worth nearly 8 per cent more than at the start of the year, added £24.9 billion to the Footsie's value.

SmithKline and Glaxo each saw increases of almost 20 per cent each, while smaller drug rivals Nycomed Amersham and Zeneca also saw sharp rises in their share price.

Glaxo shares leapt 340p to 1,968p and SmithKline shares rose 65p to 844½p — valuing Glaxo at £70 billion and SKB at £47 billion.

The rise in value means that a merged group would leapfrog Royal Dutch Shell to become the world's second biggest company, behind General Electric of the US.

Meanwhile, shares in British Telecom also jumped sharply, amid rumours that BT was to reopen merger talks with Cable & Wireless.

Similarly, a clutch of banking and insurance stocks saw big rises, with HSBC — which owns Midland Bank — Royal Bank of Scotland, Standard Chartered and General Accident moving sharply higher on merger speculation and a strong overnight showing by the Hong Kong market.

City analysts said there was no reason why the market could not continue rising, given the huge amounts of cash available for investment from financial institutions.

Nick Knight, equities strategist at investment bank Nomura, who described yesterday's market moves as "awesome", reflected that Britain was on the point of moving into a "Goldilocks" — not too hot, not too cold — economic environment, similar to that of the US.

He said: "Anyone who had been thinking the market was looking overvalued is now, frankly, embarrassed."

Some brokers now see the Footsie as meaningless as a barometer of corporate health because of the way it is dominated by a handful of pharmaceutical and financial stocks.

However, Philip Wolstencroft, strategist at US-owned broker Merrill Lynch — which accounts for one in four shares traded on the London market — insisted the index was still an important indicator of activity.

Mr Wolstencroft — who expects the Footsie to be at 6000 by the end of the year — said: "Glaxo, SmithKline and Zeneca have all seen their market values increase by billions today, and that's obviously more important than what happens in the small-caps sector."

Costs drive riders on the global carousel

Mark Milner

THE latest spin in the pharmaceutical industry's merger merry-go-round will turn the competitive screws on Europe's drugmakers.

The planned combination of Britain's Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham will leave Europe's pharmaceutical groups with just two choices, says Gerrit Jost, pharmaceuticals analyst at Commerzbank in Frankfurt.

"There are two ways to go. One is to try to be a global player but a lot of smaller companies will have to specialise in areas where margins are higher." He adds that the pressure to grow will be most intense among the biggest firms.

The snag is that none of Europe's most important drugmakers are stand-alone companies and three are part of the triumvirate of big German chemical companies, Hoechst, BASF and Bayer. So far all three have abandoned the idea of stock market flotations of their pharmaceutical interests.

Higher on drugs

Zeneca	↑ 10.0%
Hoechst	↑ 8.4%
Pharmacia & Upjohn	↑ 7.3%
Schering	↑ 6.3%
Astra	↑ 5.7%
Novo Nordisk	↑ 3.1%
Akzo Nobel	↑ 2.7%
Roche Holdings	↑ 1.0%

Pharmaceutical share price rises yesterday

One criticism aimed at the German groups is that they are short of new and innovative drugs in the pipeline. That adds to the pressures for expansion, particularly at Bayer, say analysts.

One group rubbing its hands, in response to the stock market reaction to the proposed Glaxo Wellcome-SKB merger, is France's Rhône-Poulenc, which announced plans last year to float its pharmaceuticals business Rhône-Poulenc Rorer. Last week it said the move was expected to take place later this year.

Switzerland already has experience of hefty mergers with the marriage of Sandoz and Ciba Geigy to form Novartis, seen as having the financial muscle to make a big acquisition.

The drive towards consolidation is not simply a question of big is better. Drug companies are under increasing pressure from cost conscious customers. Governments, alarmed at the rising cost of health care as citizens live longer, have sought to squeeze suppliers. The costs of getting new drugs to the market are rising, yet they may have less time in which to reward their inventors.

Robin Campbell at Paribas, however, argues that while cost-cutting drove the previous wave of mergers in the industry in the late 1980s, more recent moves are being spurred on by the need to come up with new drugs, especially for the US market. Though mergers have been a popular response to the competitive pressures, the jury is out as to whether it is the most effective.

According to a study by McKinsey & Co, the savings generated tend to be the equivalent of between 10 and 30 per cent of the smaller partners' cost base. But another management consultancy, AT Kearney, has calculated that those companies which have been part of the mergers in the pharmaceutical industry over the last decade "have generally had lower economic returns".

That is not a message the stock markets are in a mood to hear. Pharmaceutical companies round Europe saw their share prices soar yesterday with several registering double digit improvements on the back of the Glaxo Wellcome-SKB talks.

A tiddler among the titans benefits from speculation

Ian King

ZENECA, Britain's third-biggest drugs company, has been a bid candidate almost since it was demerged from ICI, in May 1993. Yesterday, Zeneca shares leapt 235p to 2680p, valuing it at £25.4 billion, as traders scrambled for stock in the first session following news of the Glaxo/SmithKline talks.

That puts the shares at a value of over 30 times their prospective earnings for 1998 and nearly twice the average rating for companies in the FTSE-All Share index.

Zeneca is in play for one reason — it is relatively small compared with titans like Glaxo-SmithKline and America's Merck. Accordingly, analysts have speculated about a number of possible merger partners or bidders over the past few years, with Switzerland's Roche and Sweden's Astra frequently mentioned.

Behind the takeover froth, Zeneca offers plenty of attractions to a partner, not least its formidable product portfolio. Apart from the cardiovascular range Zestril, migraine treatment Zomig and schizophrenia drug Seroquel, Zeneca has won plaudits for its cancer drugs Zoladex and Nolvadex, which were launched on the innovative premise that patients could live with cancer, given the right treatment. Other products owned by Zeneca include Quorn, the fungal-based meat alternative, and an array of pesticides and fungicides.

Zeneca's weak spot, though, is that its size prevents it spending as much on research and development as its larger rivals. Indeed, just before Christmas, it announced plans to double research output to counter City critics.

Reuter sends agent to unravel Bloomberg mystery

Dan Atkinson

A TOP-LEVEL troubleshooter from Reuters, the international news agency, has been despatched to untangle events at the US subsidiary which is believed to be at the centre of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The company said it was frustrated by the absence of any specific charges relating to alleged theft of information from rival Bloomberg. US reports suggested that the FBI's computer crimes unit was pursuing a former Bloomberg employee alleged to have sold the stolen information to Reuters.

Meanwhile, the US Attorney's Office in New York would neither confirm nor deny that an inquiry was under way or that a federal grand jury was investigating.

Prosecutors are said to have seized 100 documents from the offices of Reuters Analytics, an offshoot based in Stamford, Connecticut, specialising in developing products for gathering and analysing financial information in the gilts and bonds area — one of Bloomberg's great strengths.

The documents are said to include communications between Reuters Analytics and the consulting company alleged to have been hired to steal data from Bloomberg. They include memos and other requests for detailed information about technical programmes for analysing investments, according to The New York Times yesterday.

The consultant was believed to have broken into Bloomberg's computers to obtain the information and give it to Reuters. Although the consulting company was not identified, it is also based in Stamford and was said to be founded by a former Bloomberg employee, the paper reported.

Three executives from Reuters Analytics have been put on paid leave, but the agency would not identify them.

Reuters HQ in London said yesterday: "Reuters is frustrated. It does not know the details of the allegation. We take this issue extremely seriously. We have sent to Stamford... a member of the executive committee, Geoffrey Weetman, to supervise the ongoing operation."

Mr Weetman is one of the most senior people at Reuters and was formerly in charge of the whole of the agency's Asian operation. Reuters has hired independent lawyers in New York, the firm of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Jatz — to conduct an investigation.

Shares in the company dropped another 3p yesterday, ending at 542p. A week ago they were around 615p.

Notebook

Blending drugs may be unhealthy



Edited by Alex Brummer

THE timing of the Glaxo and SmithKline Beecham drugs mega-merger could not have been better for equity markets on both sides of the Atlantic. It has stepped into the vacuum just as the stock market fundamentals of higher earnings, on the back of strong economic growth, were fading because of the Asian crisis.

It would be difficult to overemphasise the importance of the £100 billion or so get-together. Not just because it will create a supercharged giant in the ethical pharmaceutical industry, ahead of European and American rivals, but because it means that now any financial deal looks possible.

To put the matter in perspective, this prospective drugs merger will create a unit bigger than if IBM joined forces with Microsoft.

For stock markets recently fed on a diet of gloom it offers real hope. Now any merger speculation has resonance, which is why the FTSE 100 finished in record territory last night at 5590 after a 140.5 rise, and why Wall Street has been rising just as fast.

But does this really make so much sense? The pharmaceutical industry is a one-off. Even though a combined Glaxo/SKB will be the world's largest corporation, it will not have a dominant market position. In the drugs industry, market share is so dispersed — the new company will have 7.5 per cent of global markets — anti-trust issues (raised in multimedia and banking) do not arise.

A combination of Barclays and NatWest, for instance, would mean that, in the small business area, the new bank would have a 50 per cent share. In the pharmaceuticals market, except for some limited drug groups for asthma and migraine, that potential is absent. Once the patents run out, as Glaxo learnt with Zantac, almost anyone can pile in.

The critical questions about Glaxo/SKB relate to the nature of research and development. The wisdom has been that a cluster of excellence, represented by the UK's world-class pharmaceutical companies, has encouraged ever higher performance through competition. If cost-cutting takes out that element of the success story, then Glaxo/SKB should be blocked on public interest grounds.

Taylor's targets

HAVING taken the strategic decision to step back from investment banking, Barclays has at least cleared the decks speedily. But this has been a costly and badly handled exit which has cost shareholders about £688 million in write-offs and losses, and seriously damaged Martin Taylor's reputation as a clearing banker who would not make the same mistakes of his predecessors.

It could be argued that Barclays' exit was timely. The Asian crisis, the UBS derivatives losses, and the oncoming slowdown in the Western economies, will make the future more difficult for investment banking.

But the whole episode could be turned on its head: what if Barclays had chosen to invest the £688 million of shareholders' money it has actually wasted in the ongoing business? What if it had taken a longer-term view and, instead of liberally distributing cash to shareholders in the good year, given BZW the information technology and other facilities that it needed to be a world-class player? Perhaps, then, it could have avoided this embarrassment.

By counting the cost now, rather than waiting until its full financial results come out on February 17, Barclays plainly hopes to focus attention on the stronger underlying performance in the remainder of its business — including Barclays Capital (largely saved from BZW) where profits were up to £248 million from £201 million.

But what the market is really waiting for is Mr Taylor's big move: having off-loaded a troubled business he needs to convince investors he has some other fine arrows in his quiver.

Share codes

LAST year's building society conversions helped to achieve a goal that Mrs Thatcher aspired to but never achieved, despite her privatisation revolution. It increased the number of private shareholders in Britain, from all walks of life, to more than 15 million.

The outcome has been a broader public interest in what happens on the stock market, than has ever been the case. For some Guardian readers, the Prices Page with its authoritative market report written by Ian King (last year's top share-picker among the national newspaper writers), and the share prices service is where they turn first.

But we also have been aware of the limitations. In the space provided it is impossible to cover every quoted company, investment trust or other vehicle. So we have been struggling with the idea of providing a better service to readers which will provide them with on-line access to share prices, investment and yield information, and even track a customised share portfolio.

Every Tuesday, beginning today, share price codes will be printed against each stock quoted in the Guardian. This together with the Guardian/Interactive booklet, available free on 0891 585 700, will provide every reader of this newspaper with a new, low-cost gateway to share prices and investment. Use it to manage your portfolio better — and enjoy.

Lingerie group stops drooping as bid talks hoist shares

Tony May

SHARES in La Senza jumped 50 per cent to 25½p yesterday after the loss-making underwear group confirmed it was in bid talks with "a number of parties".

These are believed to include Ann Summers, the privately-owned sex aids and lingerie group.

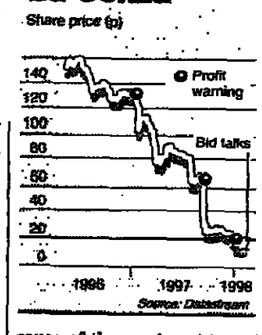
Shareholders in La Senza, which is 60 per cent owned by the Canadian women's clothing retailer Suzy Shle, must be relieved having seen shares plunge from the 156p AIM flotation rate 20 months ago, to as little as 15p.

City analysts said that while management had failed, a successful bid could be pitched as high as 40p because of the good position of the group's products and store locations.

When La Senza floated it planned a five-year expansion from 22 stores to 152, with the aim of attacking Marks & Spencers' near 40 per cent share of the £1.2 billion-a-year market. But the shares turned down despite a retail boom and a record bull stock market.

La Senza

Share price (p)



TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.326	France 9.733	Italy 2.891	Singapore 2.75
Austria 20.47	Germany 2.908	Malta 0.634	South Africa 7.84
Belgium 60.02	Greece 463.36	Netherlands 3.267	Spain 245.39
Canada 2.315	Hong Kong 12.27	New Zealand 2.70	Sweden 13.00
Cyprus 0.855	India 63.47	Norway 12.08	Switzerland 2.35
Denmark 11.16	Ireland 1.161	Portugal 287.00	Turkey 340,740
Finland 8.897	Israel 5.88	Saudi Arabia 6.02	USA 1.596

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Athletics

Nebiolo offers BAF interest-free loan

Duncan Mackay

PRIMO NEBIOLO, not always popular with British athletics administrators, yesterday offered to bail them out of their financial crisis with a substantial interest-free loan, believed to be as high as $500,000 (about £300,000).

Nebiolo, president of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, is alarmed by the collapse of the British Athletic Federation, which went into insolvency three months ago owing more than £2 million. The BAF has since laid off all its national coaches and cut back on its development programmes, but the IAAF hopes a loan will keep Britain among the world's athletics superpowers.

"We are happy to loan a certain figure with no interest," said Nebiolo. "We are in contact with the British about it. If they are interested we would be very happy if it were useful."

The offer follows recent talks with Nebiolo in Rome by David Moorcroft and Christopher Chataway, both former holders of the world 5,000 metres record. They now head UK Athletics 98, the interim governing body funded by the UK Sports Council.

"We help many federations, though normally they are smaller and from smaller countries," said an IAAF spokesman. "But this is a very special case. Track and field in Great Britain is very important for our movement and we must ensure its success."

It is the second time Nebiolo has offered financial assistance. In October, when the BAF was on the verge of bankruptcy, he offered a $250,000 loan. It was turned down because Moorcroft felt it would not solve the sport's problem.

Yesterday, however, the loan was on the agenda at a meeting of UK Athletics 98 and Moorcroft said: "We are very grateful for this offer. We shall be letting them know in the near future."

The irony will not be lost on many in the sport that the world governing body is prepared to offer money now. The BAF's financial problems stemmed largely from enforcing the IAAF's rules on doping which landed them in expensive litigation against Diane Modahl, who is now mounting a substantial counter-claim for damages. During the Modahl case the IAAF refused to help underwrite the BAF's costs.

Rugby League

Whelan deal worth £1.5m

Paul Fitzpatrick

SUPER LEAGUE is today expected to fill the sponsorship void left by the premature withdrawal of the brewers Bass last August by announcing a deal with Dave Whelan's JJB sports empire.

Whelan, a self-made millionaire, is the owner of Wigan Athletic and his company used to sponsor the town's rugby league club. He is financing a new stadium which the Warriors are set to share with Athletic following the sale of their Central Park ground to Tesco last year.

The sponsorship agreement, reckoned to be worth £1.5 million over two years, comes less than a month after Maurice Lindsay, the former chief executive of the Rugby Football League, took over as the managing director of Super League Europe, the commercial and marketing arm of the 12 elite clubs.

The RFL chairman Sir Rodney Walker has meanwhile invited Super League representatives to meet his board of directors on Thursday in an attempt to end the civil strife that is threatening to overwhelm the sport.

Walker narrowly survived an embarrassing attempt by the Super League clubs to oust him from the International Board at the end of last week, although Super League officials continue to deny they are planning a breakaway from the RFL.

"This is not about personalities," Walker responded. "We want to try to settle this dispute with discussion and dialogue."

The four amateur sides left in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup, worth £100,000 to the winner, were all given home ties in last night's fourth-round draw — although some may yet concede ground advantage. Egremont Rangers, second in the Premier Division of the National Conference, look to have the best chance of an upset when they play their near-neighbours Workington Town. The other pro-am ties match Featherstone Lions and Hull K R, Ellenborough and Hunslet, and Ovenden and Salford.

At least two of the 12 Super League clubs will be eliminated, with Leeds meeting Castleford and Halifax playing the promoted Huddersfield Giants. The holders St Helens travel to Featherstone.

Silk Cut Challenge Cup, fourth-round draw: Egremont v Workington; Barrow v Widnes; Lancashire Lynx v Dewsbury; Halifax v Huddersfield; Leeds v Castleford; Batley v London; Leigh v Sheffield; Wakefield v Warrington; Featherstone Lions v Hull K R; Ellenborough v Hunslet; Rochdale v Bradford; Swinton v York; Ovenden v Salford; Whitehaven v Hull; Keighley v Wigan; Featherstone v St Helens (ties to be played February 14-15).

Racing

Police arrest sixth man

Chris Hawkins

POLICE yesterday arrested a sixth man in connection with the investigation into possible race-fixing and doping, but there was no dramatic dawn-raid to apprehend the suspect.

The man surrendered voluntarily to officers at Charing Cross Police Station in London. He has not been identified, but is not a trainer or jockey.

Scotland Yard issued a statement which read: "A 34-year-old man voluntarily attended Charing Cross Police Station by arrangement with his solicitors and was arrested in connection with the horse-doping and race-fixing inquiry. He has been bailed to return to the police on April 29."

Two other men and the jockeys, Jamie Osborne, Dean Gallagher and Leighton Aspell, have been arrested and bailed. More arrests are expected.

It is thought that "Mr Big" the man behind any possible organised criminal activity in racing has not yet been detained.

The Jockey Club's licensing committee will decide tomorrow whether Osborne, Gallagher and Aspell will be reinstated after being diqualified from riding last Wednesday.

Such has been the angry ground-swell within racing, with fellow jockeys, even threatening strike action, that it is thought that the Jockey Club will see the injustice of its action and allow these men to continue to earn a living while inquiries continue.

Should they get back their licences it will be interesting to see the level of support they receive from owners and trainers although Osborne, who has been out of action with a broken wrist, will not be ready to resume.

Although racing's aggrieved attitude is understandable — no one likes the boat to be rocked — it should be grateful that rigorous inquiries are taking place. If there is corruption and criminal activity it is in the interests of all that it should be stamped out even though pain will be inflicted.

The one who suffers most pain through any wrongdoing and has no voice to complain is the punter and it is ironic in view of the current furore that his own protection organisation (NAPP) has been disbanded because of lack of financial support from authorities who deemed such a body unnecessary.

Rather than a jockeys' strike a punters' strike would be more in order. Just imagine where racing would be then.

Betting habits are already changing significantly with the introduction of fruit machines and lottery numbers in the shops. Racing gets no revenue from this and money which would be bet on horses is being wagered elsewhere. If punters feel they cannot trust horse racing this trend is bound to be accelerated.

Controversy seems to beset the game from all angles at the moment and a libel case involving the Sporting Life and Lynda Ramsden, the Thrisk trainer, got under way yesterday.

Mrs Ramsden, her husband Jack and jockey Kieren Fallon are bringing a case against the newspaper which cast aspersions on the running of Top Cees in his race before the Chester Cup in 1995. Top Cees finished fifth at Newmarket before winning the Chester race with ease.

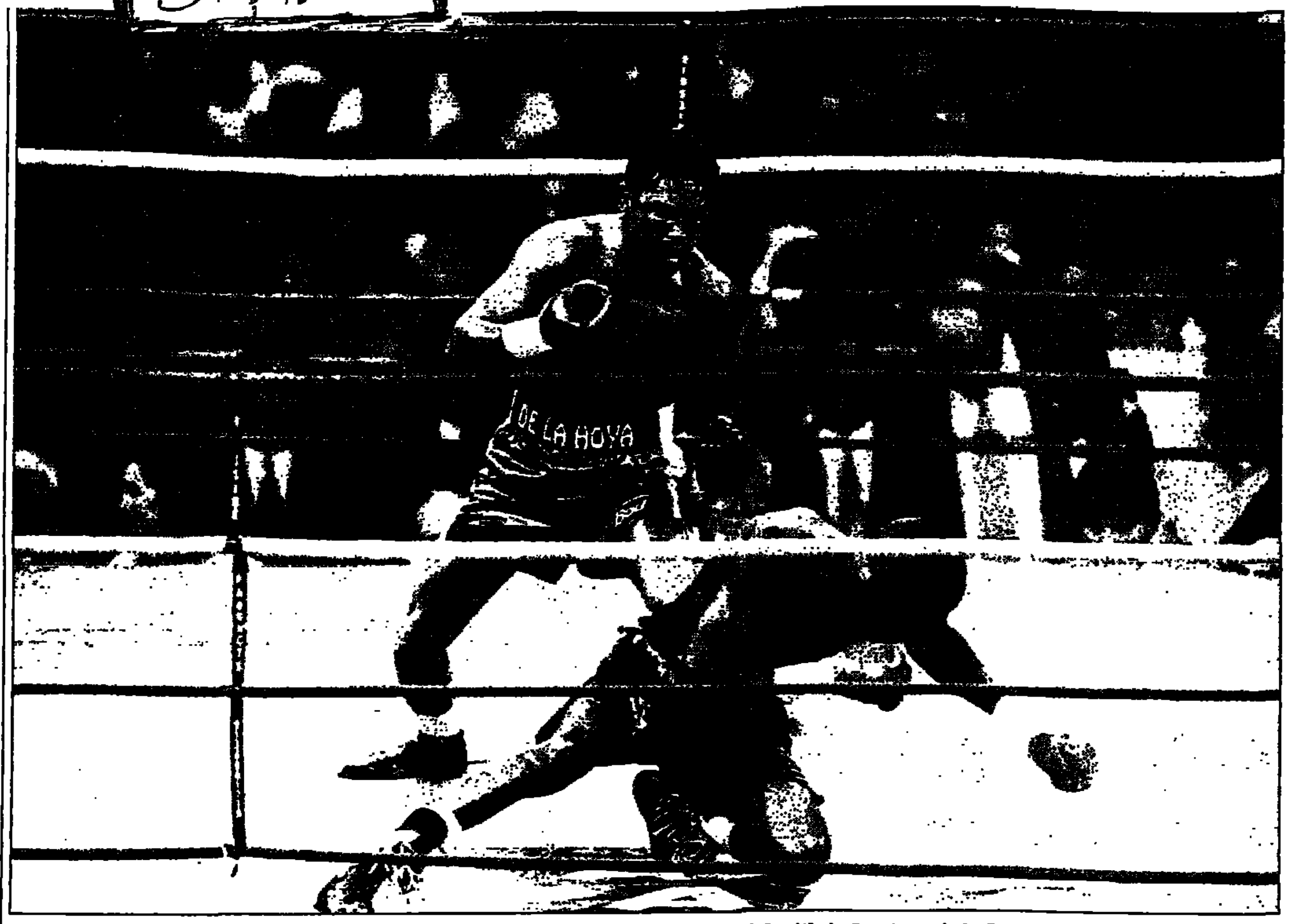
Pipe has six in Tote Hurdle

MARTIN PIPE, the Wellington trainer, has declared six for Saturday's Tote Bookmakers Hurdle at Sandown. His Allegation (11st 10lb) heads the weights, along with Mistinguett, who incurred a 6lb penalty for her easy win at Cheltenham on Saturday.

Nigel Twiston-Davies reports Mistinguett in fine shape and says she will not be bothered by the weight.

Trainer watch

Horses having their first run for a new trainer today — Musselburgh: 1.30 Nicola's Princess, B McMahon to H Alexander, Setting Sun, J Hammond to N Waggott. **Lingfield:** 1.45 Pegasus Bay, Mrs A Johnson to D Cantillon, Ripsnorter, K Bishop to P Purdy, Robellion, D Arbuthnot to Mrs L Stubbs; 3.45 After Eight, R Armstrong to M Saunders, Manolo, J Berry to D Loder; 4.15 Laguna Bay, A Jarvis to G McCourt, Premier League, J Long to K Cunningham-Brown.



Oscar winner . . . De La Hoya floors Kenya's David Kamau to retain the WBC welterweight title in San Antonio in June PHOTOGRAPH: MATTHEW STOCKMAN

De La Hoya lined up for British fight

John Rawling reports on Frank Warren's plans to put Naseem Hamed on a stellar bill

OSCAR DE LA Hoya, the current golden boy of American boxing, is likely to make his British debut in October on a bill including Naseem Hamed, the World Boxing Organisation featherweight champion.

According to the promoter Frank Warren, the 24-year-old World Boxing Council welterweight champion is "extremely keen" to fight in Britain and talks with his promoter Bob Arum are going well.

"Oscar is one of the top three fighters in the world, and he would be a huge attraction," said Warren.

"He is a great showman and putting him on with Naz is a mouth-watering prospect. Some fans have complained that they haven't had the chance to see the top Americans. But the sport is big enough now in Britain for us to attract the very best boxers. The days are gone when all the best fights automatically had to be on the other side of the Atlantic."

Many experts would go further than Warren in assessing De La Hoya's stature, feeling that his brilliant undefeated professional career should rank him ahead of all other contemporary champions. Certainly he has proved a bigger draw than his principal rival Roy Jones and he appears a more complete boxer than Hamed.

Blessed with film-star good looks and a pleasant manner, he earned between $35 and $40 million (£24.5m) last year. Only the basketball icon Michael Jordan and the IBF and WBA heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield made more.

De La Hoya, who is 25 tomorrow, was the American success story of the 1992 Olympic boxing tournament in Barcelona, where he won the lightweight gold medal, and most of his 27 victories since then (22 by stoppage) have emphasised that he is a class act inside the professional ring as well.

He has won world titles at every level from super-featherweight up to welterweight, beating Julio Cesar Chavez and Pernell Whitaker along the way, and should have few problems in his next title defence against the Frenchman Patrick Charpentier on February 28.

No opponent has yet been announced for Hamed's next title defence and the originally proposed date of March 28 — the same day Lennox Lewis is due to defend his WBC heavyweight title against Shannon Briggs in Atlantic City — now looks unlikely.

This week Warren is to meet executives of the American cable television network HBO and is likely to settle on an April date in the United States. The WBO super-bantamweight champion Kennedy McKinney and the former IBF featherweight champion (and 1997 Hamed victim) Tom Johnson are two opponents under consideration.

Lingfield (A.W.)

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
1.45	Roman Reel	Digpast
2.15	Night City	Night City (nb)
2.45	Some Might Say (nb)	Reggie Buck
3.15	Miss Skye	After Eight
3.45	Pageboy	Pageboy
4.15	Galapino	Galapino

All-weather, Equitrack, left-handed course laid out inside turf track and only 1¼m round.
Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Draw: Low numbers favoured in sprints.
Long distance travellers: Ramsey Hope (3.45) C Fairhurst, N Yorks, 270 miles; Some Might Say (2.45) M Johnston, N Yorks, 270 miles; Pageboy (3.45) P Haslam, N Yorks, 270 miles.
Seven day winners: 1.45 Roman Reel.
Blinkered first time: 2.45 Falkenberg. **Visored:** 3.45 Manolo.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J, Jumps.

1.45 PEACH AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP 1m £2,899 (12 declared)

1 (8) 0540-2 Digpast (17) (CD) J Bridger 8-12-0 — D Jones (5) ★ ●90
2 (12) 51215- Pegasus Bay (89) (C) D Cantillon 7-11-12 — A Jacobs (7) 87
3 (4) 62-221 Robellion (12) (CD) Mrs L Stubbs 7-11-9 — Miss S Newby-Vincent (7) 86
4 (6) 50-132 Bon Guest (5) (C) (D) Miss B Sanders 4-11-9 — Miss L Sheen (5) 85
5 (2) 1430-1 Roman Reel (5) (6lb ex) (CD) G L Moore 7-11-7 — Mrs J Moore (3) 84
6 (7) 02200- Aspecto Lad (J67) (D) D Wilkins 4-11-5 — E Byrne (3) ★ 81
7 (3) 60032- Dancing Lawyer (132) (CD) K Burke 7-10-12 — R Walley 81
8 (1) 306-65 Invocation (18) (CD) G L Moore 11-10-10 — Mrs A Perrett 77
9 (5) 300-43 Failed To Hit (10) N Littmoden 5-10-6 — J Tyler-Morris (7) ★ 78
10 (10) 23-322 Don't Drop Bombs (5) (CD) R McGhin 9-10-2 — Miss J Feilden ★ 77
11 (9) 00500/ Ripsnorter (536) (B) P Purdy 9-9-10 — Miss A Purdy (5) —
12 (11) 000-35 Mistamaid (12) (B) A Newcombe 8-9-10 — Miss C Bonnsford (7) 76

Betting: 7-2 Roman Reel, 5-1 Robellion, Don't Drop Bombs, 6-1 Bon Guest, 7-1 Pegasus Bay, 8-1 Digpast.

2.15 PLUM CLAIMING STAKES 1m 2f £2,832 (9 declared)

1 (8) 01-331 Night City (14) (C) K Burke 7-9-8 — D Sweeney (3) ●90
2 (1) 10/4-5 Threadneedle (14) Lord Huntingdon 5-9-6 — D Harrison 85
3 (6) 00000/ Mystic Legend (J22) L Wells 6-8-8 — R Brisland (7) —
4 (5) 0050- Certain Surprise (J80) M Madgwick 4-8-6 — M Fenton —
5 (4) 4211-1 Private Despatch (16) (CD) J Harris 8-8-6 — S Whitworth 86
6 (3) 63-562 Chingachgook (14) S Dow 4-8-5 — P Doe (7) 88
7 (6) 0003-4 Xenophon Of Cunaxa (16) B Llewellyn 5-8-4 — A McCarthy (5) —
8 (7) 000-00 Hatta Sunshine (6) (CD) G L Moore 8-8-2 — J Quinn ★ —
9 (2) 00-00 Tearlo (17) J Bridger 6-8-2 — G Bardwell —

Betting: 2-1 Private Despatch, 9-4 Night City, 9-2 Threadneedle, 7-1 Xenophon Of Cunaxa, 8-1 Chingachgook.

2.45 NECTARINE MAIDEN STAKES 1m £3,371 (6 declared)

1 (6) 236- Reggie Buck (J18) R O'Sullivan 4-8-12 — S Sanders ●90
2 (3) 604-23 Raspberry Sauce (12) C Cyzer 4-8-7 — Dean McKeown 72
3 (2) 00-466 Falkenberg (12) B Pearce 3-8-7 — C Lowther (3) ★ —
4 (4) 466-2 Great Melody (10) D Cosgrove 3-8-7 — M Glasser 88
5 (1) 2 Some Might Say (7) M Johnston 3-8-7 — D Holland 84
6 (5) 00- Tiggy Silvano (47) M Quinn 3-8-2 — A Whelan —

Betting: 6-4 Some Might Say, 7-4 Great Melody, 5-1 Reggie Buck, 7-1 Raspberry Sauce, 25-1 Falkenberg.

3.15 DAMSON SELLING STAKES 6f £1,839 (6 declared)

1 (6) 4300-3 Fairy Domino (16) M Quinn 9-0 — A Whelan 79
2 (1) 0003-5 After Eight (33) (BF) M Saunders 8-12 — R Price ★ ●90
3 (2) 6-3333 Chikapenny (5) Mrs L Stubbs 8-7 — S Whitworth ★ 81
4 (3) 4032-3 Lady Laphroaig (21) (BF) W Muir 8-7 — Martin Dwyer 88
5 (5) 0360-3 Miss Skye (14) T Naughton 8-7 — D Holland 81
6 (4) 543-33 Pearly Queen (22) (BF) G Bravery 8-7 — Declan O'Shea 84

Betting: 5-2 Lady Laphroaig, 3-1 After Eight, Pearly Queen, 9-2 Chikapenny, 7-1 Miss Skye, 25-1 Fairy Domino

3.45 GREENGAGE HANDICAP 6f £3,469 (12 declared)

1 (2) 000-15 Pageboy (27) (CD) P Haslam 9-10-0 — L Charnock ★ ●90
2 (6) 5060-5 Forgotten Times (12) (CD) K Ivory 4-9-11 — N Carlisle 85
3 (3) 01-213 Mystical (5) (CD) Mrs L Stubbs 4-9-11 — S Whitworth ★ 84
4 (9) 0250-0 Bobo Magic (17) (CD) L Montague Hall 6-9-11 — W Ryan 89
5 (12) 24-364 Scissor Ridge (12) (CD) J Bridger 6-9-9 — R Studholme (7) 87
6 (10) 032-45 Ramsey Hope (20) (C) (D) C Fairhurst 5-9-7 — P Roberts (3) ★ 87
7 (10) 00-510 Sihafi (10) (CD) (BF) D Nicholls 5-9-6 — Alex Greaves 84
8 (7) 25-142 Mutasawwar (7) (CD) M Saunders 4-9-4 — M Wigham 86
9 (1) 2350-0 The Institute Boy (21) (CD) K Burke 8-9-1 — D Sweeney (3) 87
10 (5) 13-504 Ivor's Deed (10) (C) Gay Kelleway 5-9-0 — Dane O'Neill ★ 86
11 (4) 54002- Manolo (53) D Loder 5-8-12 — G Faulkner (5) ★ 82
12 (5) 06-010 Legal Lark (11) (CD) P Howling 3-8-4 — J Quinn 80

Betting: 4-1 Sihafi, 6-1 Mutasawwar, 7-1 Scissor Ridge, 8-1 Pageboy, Mystical, Ramsey Hope, Ivor's Deed, Manolo.

4.15 CHERRY HANDICAP 1m 4f £2,806 (12 declared)

1 (6) 0202-3 Galapino (3) (C) (D) (BF) Gay Kelleway 5-10-0 — D Holland ●90
2 (3) 03262- Bathe In Light (153) Lord Huntingdon 4-9-1 — D Harrison 82
3 (5) 410-00 Palisander (12) (C) S Dow 4-8-10 — P Doe (7) —
4 (10) 14250- Laguna Bay (85) G McCourt 4-8-9 — R Studholme (7) —
5 (4) 40000- Sun Alert (85) M Polglase 4-8-2 — Amanda Sanders —
6 (8) 044-41 Aresh (8) (6lb ex) D Nicholls 5-8-2 — F Norton 82
7 (11) 00-165 Myosotis (5) (CD) P Hiatt 4-8-0 — L Charnock ★ 83
8 (7) 65-514 North Ardar (5) (C) (D) (BF) N Littmoden 8-7-12 — A McCarthy (5) 85
9 (8) 042-05 Aquatila (12) J S Moore 4-7-12 — N Adams 78
10 (1) 0330-6 Zorro (29) R Flower 4-7-10 — Martin Dwyer 82
11 (2) /2400- Premier League (305) K Cunningham-Brown 8-7-10 — N Carlisle 79
12 (12) 000-50 Paronomasia (12) J L Harris 6-7-10 — J Quinn —

Betting: 7-2 Bathe In Light, 4-1 Aresh, 5-1 North Ardar, 6-1 Galapino, 8-1 Myosotis, Aquatila, 12-1 Zorro.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level Sl
J Weaver	75	330	22.7	+24.38
L Dettori	62	244	25.4	+9.57
A Clark	57	427	13.3	-37.52
S Sanders	47	436	10.8	-140.81
S Whitworth	42	243	17.3	-47.24
D Holland	37	159	23.3	+25.22
D Harrison	33	231	14.3	-27.57

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level Sl
G L Moore	69	488	14.7	-27.49
M Johnston	47	252	18.7	-34.13
Ld Huntingdon	33	164	20.1	-13.29
R O'Sullivan	33	247	13.4	-64.47
Miss Kelleway	29	174	18.7	-61.74
T Naughton	28	208	12.6	-58.70
C Cyzer	24	166	14.5	-15.45

Musselburgh Jackpot card with form guide

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
1.30	Manful	Rawi (nap)
2.00	George Dillingham	Toby
2.30	Master Bavard	Fern Leader
3.00	China King	Blue Charm
3.30	Duke Of Perth	Acajou III
4.00	Dr Bones (nap)	Eden Dancer
4.30	Camden Moon	—

Right-handed oval track of 1m3f with 150yds run-in.
Going: Good, good to soft in places. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Long distance travellers: Nicola's Princess (1.30) H Alexander, N Yorks, 195 miles.
Seven day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: 1.30 Manful; 3.30 Duke Of Perth. **Visored:** None.

1.30 DOLLAR NOVICE HURDLE 2m £2,763 (15 declared)

101 1-56P Braydon (31) (D) P Monteith 5-11-10 — I Jardine (7) 78
102 41 Rawi (34) (D) J Charlton 5-11-10 — B Storey ●90
103 43-421 Ambuch (46) J Barry 5-11-3 — D Parker —
104 240 Amosbic (36) M Todhunter 5-11-3 — B Harding —
105 5 Archie-T (48) P Beaumont 5-11-3 — R Supple —
106 Conner (F22) D Nicholls 5-11-3 — A Dobbin —
107 63 Hoh Express (39) Mrs J Ramsden 6-11-3 — A P McCoy 79
108 32 Manful (27) (BF) Miss L Perratt 6-11-3 — J Callaghan ★ 84
109 0 Rusk (30) T Easterby 5-11-3 — L Wyer —
110 Setting Sun (F190) N Waggott 5-11-3 — M Foster —
111 3 Shining Example (18) J J O'Neill 6-11-3 — P Carberry 80
112 Nicola's Princess (F146) H Alexander 5-10-12 — R McGrath (3) —
113 0 Tirivity (27) B Mactaggart 8-10-12 — G Lee —
114 6 Hibernate (31) J Howard Johnson 4-10-7 — A S Smith —
115 3 Norman Conquest (38) M Hammond 4-10-7 — R Garritty 81

Betting: 7-2 Rawi, 4-1 Manful, 5-1 Norman Conquest, 8-1 Hoh Express, Shining Example, 10-1 Ambuch, Rusk.

FORM GUIDE - **Rawi:** 6-1 Led approaching two out, won at Catterick 2m mdn hdle, Gd, beat J J Baboo by a head. **Ambuch:** Tracked leaders until blundered and unseated rider 5 out in race won by Majestic Sound at Haydock 2m nov hdle, Gd-Sft. **Hoh Express:** Led 6th until three out, 3rd of 15, 25l behind Justin Mac, **Rusk** (levels) a well-beaten 10th, Wetherby 2m nov hdle, Sft. **Manful:** Chased leaders, effort 3 out, soon outpaced, stayed on again, nearest finish, 2nd of 13, 3l behind Gospel Song at Musselburgh 2m mdn hdle, Gd-Sft. **Shining Example:** Led 4th to 5th, one pace, 3rd of 9, 16l behind King Of Thieves at Musselburgh 2m nov hdle, Gd-Sft. **Norman Conquest:** Headway three out, one pace approaching last, 2nd of 8, 18l behind Bimburgh Boy at Wetherby 2m nov hdle, Sft.

2.00 WHITE CASTLE NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 4f £2,861 (12 declared)

201 -11P33 Toby (48) (D) G Richards 5-11-10 — B Harding ●90
202 411310 Baher (12) (C) S Clark 9-11-8 — Miss R Clark (5) 84
203 25/021 George Dillingham (18) (C) D Smith 8-11-6 — L Wyer 86
204 136201 Lord Rullah (35) (D) J Wade 7-11-4 — A Dobbin 87
205 34-312 Irish Wildcard (35) J Howard Johnson 10-11-4 — E Callaghan 89
206 0-60U0 Gale Force (46) P Beaumont 7-11-0 — R Supple —
207 2035 Warrilla (17) C Fairhurst 4-11-0 — J Callaghan 86
208 3660-2 Natty Solera (83) C Parker 8-10-11 — B Storey 89
209 365555 Leap In The Dark (6) (D) Miss L Siddall 9-10-8 — T Reed 83
210 4634 Hoh Explorer (17) D Barker 4-10-4 — A P McCoy 81
211 0-5F4P Kirtser (48) M Hammond 6-10-2 — Mr C Bonner (3) —
212 0-F04 Really Useful (18) M Todhunter 6-10-0 — P Carberry 81

Betting: 7-2 Irish Wildcard, 4-1 George Dillingham, 9-2 Lord Rullah, 7-1 Toby, 8-1 Baher, Natty Solera, Hoh Explorer

FORM GUIDE - **Toby:** Chased leaders, outpaced 6th, stayed on from 2 out, not pace to challenge, 3rd of 6, 29l behind Biran at Catterick 2m 3l hcp hdle, Gd. **Baher:** Mid-division, effort and hard ridden approaching 3 out, no impression, 7th of 20, 10l behind African Sun at Ludlow 2m sell hcap hdle, Gd-Sft. **George Dillingham:** Chased leader from 3rd, led 3 out, clear last, eased flat, won at Musselburgh 2m nov hdle, Gd-Sft, beat Feel A Line by 18l. **Lord Rullah:** Chased leader, disputed lead 3 out, soon led, stayed on well, won at Carlisle 2m 4f hcap hdle, Sft, beat Rusty Reel 13l. **Irish Wildcard:** Led until headed between last 2, kept on, no chance with winner, 2nd of 13, 29l behind Lucradou at Carlisle 2m 4f nov hdle, Sft. **Natty Solera:** Prominent halfway, led 3 out until headed last, kept on under pressure, 2nd of 11, 1l behind More Champagne at Kelso 2m 6l nov hcap hdle, Gd. **Hoh Explorer:** Outpaced and behind until stayed on well from 3 out, 4th of 11, 25l behind Robbo at Newcastle 2m nov hdle, Gd-Sft.

2.30 ANDERSON STRATHERN NOVICE CHASE 3m £3,456 (13 declared)

301 24U41F Fern Leader (18) (CD) C Grant 8-11-10 — A Thornton ★ ●90
302 621P46 Master Bavard (17) (CD) P Monteith 10-11-10 — A Dobbin 89
303 -4030P Baby Jake (33) (D) J Howard Johnson 8-11-4 — E Callaghan 88
304 5311-0 Claywalls (33) (D) Mrs A Hamilton 7-11-4 — B Storey —
305 F62U32 Cottstown Boy (27) Mrs S Bradburne 7-11-4 — Mr M Bradburne (5) 81
306 6/F-PP Forever Shy (38) Mrs K Lamb 10-11-4 — Miss S Lamb (7) —
307 5U-04U Funny Ye Know (56) (D) F Murtagh 9-11-4 — B Harding 78
308 /2-F33 Hobkirk (35) A Whillans 9-11-4 — M Foster 79
309 P32/P0 McLoughlin (56) F Kirby 9-11-4 — W Dwan —
310 00-0P Rushlin (78) J Barry 6-11-4 — D Parker —
311 2P0/44 Sillars Stalker (10) Mrs A Swinbank 10-11-4 — J Supple 81
312 056/0P Zambezer (56) (D) W Storey 7-11-4 — P Carberry —
313 P6-4 Springlea Tower (33) R Nixon 5-10-7 — C McCormack (5) —

Betting: 7-2 Hobkirk, 9-2 Master Bavard, 5-1 Fern Leader, 11-2 Sillars Stalker, 13-2 Baby Jake, 7-1 Cottstown Boy, 8-1 Funny Ye Know.

FORM GUIDE - **Fern Leader:** Mistakes, in touch until fell at the 9th in race won by Winter Belle at Catterick 3m 1f hcap ch, Sft. **Master Bavard:** Mistake 6th, soon tailed off, 6th of 9, well behind Celestial Choir at Newcastle 2m 4f nov ch, Gd-Sft. **Cottstown Boy:** Headway 13th, stayed on strongly from 2 out, finished fast, 2nd of 7, 3l behind Fern Leader at Musselburgh 3m hcap ch, Gd-Sft. **Funny Ye Know:** With leaders, hit 10th, reminders and lost place 12th, poor 5th when unseated rider 2 out in race won by Noosa Sound at Sedgefield 3m 3f mdn ch, Gd. **Hobkirk:** Always chasing leaders, hit 7th, one pace from 3 out, 3rd of 12, 17l behind Celestial Choir at Carlisle 2m 4f nov ch, Sft. **Sillars Stalker:** Chased leaders until weakened approaching 3 out, 4th of 8, 25l behind Forestal at Catterick 2m nov ch, Sft. **Springlea Tower:** Headway when blundered 11th, weakened three out, 4th of 15, 32l behind Prime Example. **Baby Jake:** tailed off when pulled up three out, Catterick 3m 1f mdn ch, Gd-Sft.

3.00 KILMANY CUP HANDICAP CHASE 2m 4f £3,590 (6 declared)

401 1-F124 Blue Charm (17) (CD) Mrs S Bradburne 8-11-10 — Mr M Bradburne (5) ●90
402 2U-352 Puritan (48) (CD) N Tinkler 9-11-8 — Sophie Mitchell (5) ★ 82
403 53-3F5 Mirella Express (10) J Howard Johnson 9-11-7 — A Dobbin 83
404 -11235 Wise Advice (48) (CD) M Hammond 8-11-4 — R Garritty 90
405 -12231 China King (18) (C) J FitzGerald 7-10-8 — P Carberry 88
406 33-142 Val de Rama (38) (BF) D Smith 9-10-2 — L Wyer 86

Betting: 9-4 China King, 11-4 Puritan, 4-1 Val De Rama, 5-1 Blue Charm, 6-1 Mirella Express, 10-1 Wise Advice.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level Sl
P Carberry	13	44	29.5	+15.79
P Niven	12	61	19.7	+22.75
B Storey	12	99	12.1	-23.51
R Garritty	10	52	19.2	-10.25
A Dobbin	10	77	13	-31.83
D Parker	8	53	15.1	+24.32
A Thornton	7	62	11.3	-32.00

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level Sl
M Hammond	21	96	21.9	+35.93
J Johnson	15	81	18.5	-16.61
P Monteith	12	70	17.1	+17.82
C Parker	9	38	23.7	-0.18
Mrs Bradburne	9	60	15.7	+14.75
J Barry	5	11	45.5	+18.37
N Tinkler	5	27	18.5	-4.63

FORM GUIDE - **Blue Charm:** Chased leaders, 4th and beaten when blundered last, 4th of 9, 27l behind Cittadino at Newcastle 2m 4f hcap ch, Gd-Sft. **Puritan:** Outpaced 8th, headway 3 out, every chance last, no extra near finish, 2nd of 5, head behind Montrave, **Wise Advice** (gave 3lb) last, btn 40l, Musselburgh 2m 4f hcap ch, Gd. **Mirella Express:** Led to 5th, hit next, weakened 8th, 5th of 10, 38l behind Cattly Hang at Wetherby 2m 4f hcap ch, Sft. **China King:** Chased leader from 4th, led 3 out, stayed on well, won at Musselburgh 2m nov ch, Gd-Sft, beat Moss Pageant by 4l. **Val De Rama:** Challenged two out, soon ridden and not quicken, 2nd of 6, 6l behind Marble Man at Sedgefield 2m hcap ch, Sft.

3.30 TYNE WATER HANDICAP HURDLE 3m £3,305 (10 declared)

501 12314 Acajou III (73) (D) (BF) G Richards 10-11-10 — P Carberry ●90
502 U-1331 Tough Test (38) (CD) Mrs J Goodfellow 8-11-5 — Mr S Durack (5) 85
503 12-406 Mr Christie (17) (CD) Miss L Siddall 6-11-3 — A Thornton 86
504 1-231D Palace Of Gold (34) (C) (D) L Lungo 8-10-13 — R Supple 85
505 14121 Forzair (18) (C) J J O'Neill 6-10-13 — A P McCoy 87
506 23-0P4 Duke Of Perth (36) J Howard Johnson 7-10-10 — A S Smith ★ 87
507 6/1632 Topothenorthracing (18) P Beaumont 8-10-8 — A Dobbin 89
508 460/60 Prophits Pride (18) P Monteith 6-10-0 — I Jardine (7) —
509 4-P6P6 What Jim Wants (19) J J O'Neill 5-10-0 — R McGrath (3) —
510 /P0-00 Kir (18) V Thompson 10-10-0 — R Wilkinson (5) 77

Betting: 5-2 Acajou III, 7-2 Palace Of Gold, 9-2 Topothenorthracing, 6-1 Forzair, 7-1 Tough Test, Mr Christie

FORM GUIDE - **Acajou III:** Set strong pace until 3 out, 4th of 7, 28l behind Stacy Nun at Catterick 3m 1f hcap hdle, Gd. **Tough Test:** Led run-in, won at Musselburgh 3m hcap ch, Gd, beat Blue Charm by 3l. **Mr Christie:** Ran on, 6th of 14, 14l behind Hit The Canvas at Newcastle 3m hcap hdle, Gd-Sft. **Palace Of Gold:** Led four out until approaching 2 out, lost weight cloth after last, led flat, won at Catterick 3m 1f cond hcap hdle, Gd, beat Troodos by a neck but was subsequently disqualified and placed last. **Forzair:** Led last, driven out, won at Musselburgh 2m 4f nov hcap hdle, Gd-Sft, beat Little Duke by 3l. **Topothenorthracing:** Led to 8th, disputed lead 3 out, one pace from next, 2nd of 8, 6l behind Robingo at Musselburgh 3m hcap hdle, Gd-Sft.

4.00 SPOTT NOVICE CHASE 2m £3,374 (7 declared)

601 00-3F1 Adamatic (31) (CD) R Allan 7-11-9 — B Storey 83
602 66/234 Broadwater Boy (10) M Hammond 10-11-2 — Mr C Bonner (3) 87
603 1124FF Eden Dancer (31) (CD) J Howard Johnson 6-11-2 — A S Smith ●90
604 54-P32 Moss Pageant (18) F Walton 8-11-2 — T Reed 85
605 0P/09 Silver Pearl (11) J Barclay 7-11-2 — A Thornton —
606 -24146 Dr Bones (18) (D) F Murphy 5-10-7 — Mr O McPhail (7) —
607 0-0036 Falcon's Flame (18) V Thompson 5-10-7 — Mr M Thompson 84

Betting: 2-1 Eden Dancer, 9-2 Adamatic, Moss Pageant, 5-1 Dr Bones, 13-2 Broadwater Boy, Falcon's Flame, 16-1 Silver Pearl.

FORM GUIDE - **Adamatic:** Headway 8th, went 2nd after 3 out, ridden when left in lead last, held on well, won at Musselburgh 2m nov ch, Gd-Sft, beat Supreme Soviet by 3l. **Broadwater Boy:** Chased leaders, ridden 4 out, outpaced from 2 out, 4th of 15, 18l behind Desert Brave at Catterick 2m 3f hcap ch, Sft. **Eden Dancer:** Led, 6 lengths clear when fell at the last in race won by Adamatic at Musselburgh 2m nov ch, Gd-Sft. **Moss Pageant:** Led and soon clear, headed 3 out, kept on same pace, 2nd of 10, 4l behind China King, **Falcon's Flame** (rec 3lb) 6th, btn 38, Musselburgh 2m nov ch, Gd-Sft. **Silver Pearl:** In touch until outpaced from 3 out, 6th of 12, 30l behind Deep Water at Kelso 2m nov hdle, Heavy.

4.30 WEATHERBYS OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT 2m £1,558 (15 declared)

1 1/ Bit O Magic (828) (D) R Allan 6-11-11 — S Melrose (7)
2 6-1 Camden Moon (36) (CD) J Hanson 5-11-11 — L Wyer
3 Beckley Dancer W McKeown 6-11-4 — C McCormack (5)
4 Bocheburg F Murtagh 5-11-4 — A Dobbin
5 Sylcan Express C Grant 5-11-4 — Mr S Durack (5)
6 Tale Bridge T Easterby 5-11-4 — R Garritty
7 That Man J Wade 5-11-4 — A S Smith
8 Auchendinny Jay P Monteith 6-10-13 — I Jardine (7)
9 2 Flutterby Lady (27) L Lungo 5-10-13 — R Supple
10 000- Meggie Scott (284) J Dodds 5-10-13 — A Thornton
11 Paperback Writer G White 6-10-13 — Mr L Temple (7)
12 0-0 Saddly Supreme (85) T Cuthbert 5-10-13 — Mr T Davidson (7)
13 Tipping Tina W Storey 5-10-13 — R McGrath (3)
14 Winning Bid P Beaumont 5-10-13 — M Mello (7)
15 B Tom's Man (17) G White 4-10-8 — B Storey

Betting: 5-2 Camden Moon, 7-2 Flutterby Lady, 5-1 Bit O Magic, 13-2 Tipping Tina, 7-1 Tale Bridge.

Results

SOUTHWELL

12.45 (2m): 1, NOUFARI, A McCarthy (11-4 fav); **2, All On** (3-1); **3, La Menorquina** (7-2). 9 ran. ¾, 12. (R Hollinshead) Tote: £3.70; £1.60, £1.10, £1.30. Dual F: £4.80. Trio: £8.20. CSF: £10.13. Tricast: £25.21.

1.15 (1m): 1, INCLINATION, Dale Gibson (13-2); **2, Bella's Legacy** (14-1); **3, Down The Yard** (7-1). 5-2 fav Ma Barnicle. 10 ran. Nk, 1. (M Blanshard) Tote: £8.90; £2.80, £3.90, £1.20. Dual F: £82.90. Trio: £112.20. CSF: £92.31. Tricast: £621.79.

1.45 (2m): 1, SWING WEST, R Ffrench (9-4 fav); **2, Chabrol** (7-1); **3, Hal Hoo Yaroom** (4-1). 9 ran. 1¾, sh hd. (P Eccles) Tote: £2.90; £1.60, £2.60, £1.50. Dual F: £13.10. Trio: £20.60. CSF: £17.87. Tricast: £56.40.

2.15 (6f): 1, ZIGGY'S DANCER, C Lowther (6-4 fav); **2, Bold Aristocrat** (9-4); **3, Dearly** (12-1). 9 ran. 7, nk. (E Alston) Tote: £3.10; £1.30, £1.20, £2.00. Dual F: £3.70. Trio: £11.00. CSF: £4.49.

2.45 (6f): 1, SUE ME, F Norton (6-1); **2, Broadstairs Beauty** (3-1 fav); **3, First Maite** (4-1). 10 ran. 1¾, hd. (D Nicholls) Tote: £7.00; £2.20, £2.20, £1.40. Dual F: £13.10. Trio: £15.30. CSF: £23.01. Tricast: £77.29.

3.15 (7f): 1, EMINENT, W Ryan (8-11 fav); **2, Fearless** (4-1); **3, Fayre** (5-1). 8 ran. 10, 1¾. (Lord Huntingdon) Tote: £2.00; £1.40, £1.60, £1.10. Dual F: £3.00. Trio: £2.90. CSF: £4.15. NR: Atlanta.

3.45 (1m): 1, SHARP MONKEY, P McCabe (7-4 fav); **2, River Frontier** (12-1); **3, Technician** (7-1). 12 ran. ¾, ¾. (Mrs N Macauley) Tote: £2.90; £1.30, £5.00, £2.30. Dual F: £20.80. Trio: £33.80. CSF: £26.04. Tricast: £126.85. NR: Ivy Bird.

4.15 (1m): 1, DUST, W Ryan (5-4 fav); **2, Gipsy Princess** (9-2); **3, Cats Bottom** (7-2). 8 ran. 7, ¾. (Lord Huntingdon) Tote: £2.60; £1.10, £2.60, £1.90. Dual F: £9.30. Trio: £3.50. CSF: £7.46. Tricast: £16.84.

PLACEPOT: £14.30. **QUADPOT:** £2.60.

PLUMPTON: Frost.

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Football

Owen gets England nod ahead of Fowler

David Lacey finds Hoddle's selection to play Chile largely reflects recent form

MICHAEL OWEN has been given an opportunity to make a late dash for England's World Cup squad leaving Robbie Fowler, his Liverpool team-mate, to ponder the consequences of dropping the baton.

Glenn Hoddle has included the 18-year-old Owen in his 24-strong party for the warm-up game against Chile at Wembley tomorrow week. Fowler, four years older and with much more Premiership experience, has been left out despite scoring one of the goals in England's 2-0 win over Cameroon in November.

To some extent Hoddle's choice is purely a matter of form. When Fowler played against Cameroon he was full of goals but then came a three-match suspension and his game has not been the same since. Owen, on the other hand, has prospered with regular first-team football at Anfield.

Hoddle trusts Fowler will rediscover his scoring touch to force his way back into the England squad in good time for the World Cup. But either way, in Owen's case, the wind is set fair for France.

"What I liked about Michael," the England coach explained yesterday, "is that from the first day he trained with the full squad he didn't look or feel out of place. He showed a lot of maturity against experienced players.

"There is a time to show them no respect and that is either the hour-and-a-half of a football match or an hour of training. You can respect them for what they've done as players, but not when you're up against them.

"Sometimes, as a youngster, you can be in awe of people and the natural performance that's in you doesn't come out. But this kid can handle it. And what he's doing against good experienced Premier League defenders, week in and week out, suggests he might be capable of getting into the final 22 in five months' time."

Whether or not Fowler is there alongside Owen largely depends on Fowler. "Robbie's not been scoring and perhaps his work rate's gone down," Hoddle said. "Now he has to respond in the right way.

"Psychologically I think he needs to do some work. Eighty per cent of this game is about confidence. It's in the mind. Mental strength has to come back and Robbie needs to put that right to get over his little barren spell.

"He worked extremely hard against Blackburn on Saturday and didn't get his just rewards. If he continues to work that hard then I think the goals will start going back in for him. In the meantime I'll have had the opportunity to find out if other players are ahead of him or behind him."

Hoddle could have advanced a similar case for omitting Les Ferdinand this time but the Tottenham striker has been retained despite problems with form, fitness and Spurs' Swiss manager Christian Gross. Dion Dublin, whose decision to stay at Coventry City a while longer has been accompanied by a spate of goals, has been picked ahead of Stan Collymore but will do well to make the bench against Chile.

Nevertheless the inclusion of players such as Owen and Dublin, as well as Fowler's absence, is a pertinent reminder of how much things can change during the course of a season. Few last August would have rated Andy Cole's World Cup chance's ahead of those of Fowler but now it will be a surprise if Hoddle does not play the Manchester United partnership of Cole and Teddy Sheringham against Chile.

This could be Cole's chance to lay claim to the attacking place in the squad earmarked for Ian Wright, who may be fit enough to return to the Arsenal team against Chelsea on Sunday but is too short of match-practice to be included by Hoddle. David Seaman and Jamie Redknapp are also recovering from injuries.

Alan Shearer's recall is largely symbolic. Hoddle said yesterday that the England captain would not be starting against Chile which means that Shearer's full international comeback will be delayed until Switzerland visit Wembley on March 25.

The B international against Chile at West Bromwich on Tuesday should give Chris Sutton, Paul Merson, Ray Parlour and Emile Heskey a chance to establish themselves on the fringes of World Cup selection should injuries or loss of form seriously disrupt Hoddle's plans. And Nick Barmby's recall will encourage others who may feel their international chance has gone for good. There might be hope for Collymore yet.

ENGLAND B SQUAD: Hislop (Newcastle), Pressman (Sheff Wed), Watson (Newcastle), R Ferdinand (West Ham), Mattee (Liverpool), Dyer (Ipswich), Wilcox (Blackburn), Parlour (Arsenal), Quashie (QPR), Merson (Middlesbrough), Barmby (Everton), Radie (Norwich), Sutton (Blackburn), Heskey (Leicester), Hackerby (Coventry), Scimeca (Aston Villa), Carragher (Liverpool), Lampard (West Ham), Guppy (Leicester).

The squad

N Martyn (Leeds), age 31, 5 caps
T Flowers (Blackburn), 30, 9
G Neville (Man Utd), 22, 23
P Neville (Man Utd), 21, 8
G Le Saux (Chelsea), 29, 21
A Hinchcliffe (Sheff Wed), 28, 4
T Adams (Arsenal), 31, 48
G Southgate (Aston Villa), 27, 22
S Campbell (Tottenham), 23, 12
P Ince (Liverpool), 30, 35
P Gascoigne (Rangers), 30, 54
D Beckham (Man Utd), 22, 12
D Batty (Newcastle), 29, 27
N Butt (Man Utd), 23, 4
R Lee (Newcastle), 33, 14
P Scholes (Man Utd), 23, 5
T Sheringham (Man Utd), 31, 29
A Shearer (Newcastle), 27, 35
S McManaman (Liverpool), 25, 19
A Cole (Man Utd), 26, 2
M Owen (Liverpool), 18, 0
M Keown (Arsenal), 31, 15
D Dublin (Coventry), 28, 0
L Ferdinand (Tottenham), 31, 14



Locks forward . . . the Sweden international Henrik Larsson, who headed Celtic's second goal on 35 minutes, surges through Aberdeen's defence

Scottish Premier Division: Celtic 3, Aberdeen 1

Celtic earn glimpse of the top

Patrick Glenn

CELTIC moved into a three-way share of the Premier Division lead with a victory that was as predictable as it was ultimately comfortable.

When the substitute Darren Jackson whipped a close-range shot high past Jim Leighton near the end he merely confirmed a superiority that had been growing in the Celtic team since they conceded an early opener to David Rowson.

Celtic have recently developed the worrying habit of conserving their sense of urgency and their quick and deadly movement until after the opposition have gone ahead.

They did it again last night, less than a week after allowing Dundee United the same first-half luxury. But this time the Parkhead side asserted themselves so quickly after Rowson's opener that they were ahead before half-time.

They also managed to shake the frame of the goal twice during a period of aggressiveness that brought a mixture of sound finishing and bad luck. During those earlier minutes, however, their lethargy almost allowed Aberdeen to establish what could have been a telling advantage.

Not only did Rowson score after eight minutes, but Mike Newell's quick, powerful header forced Jonathan Gould into an extraordinary save soon after. All of this before Morten Wieghorst equalised and Henrik Larsson gave the home side the lead.

Rowson's goal was bedecked in good fortune, his 25-yard drive following a corner on the left taking a wicked deflection from Alan Stubbs and eluding Gould high to the goalkeeper's left. Stubbs himself had rattled Leighton's crossbar with a clean, powerful header from Jackie McNamara's corner on the right.

McNamara followed with a 25-yard drive that slew away to the right of Leighton but came back off the inside of the post before Wieghorst equalised in the 21st minute.

Another McNamara cross from the right was knocked on to Wieghorst by Paul Lambert and the big Dane rolled the shot from 15 yards to the right of Leighton.

Larsson finally put Celtic ahead 10 minutes before the interval with a six-yard header after Marc Rieper headed forward Stubbs's free-kick.

Celtic's keenness to avoid a repeat of their slow start to the first half brought such a concentration of pressure early in the second that they would have been much further ahead but for Leighton's work.

The goalkeeper managed to block Burley's low shot after the midfielder had been released on Larsson's dummy into an inviting position on the right side of the area. Harald Brattbakk took the loose ball and his chip would have counted, too, but for Leighton's leap to flick the ball over the bar.

Before those incidents, McNamara had a bad miss. Larsson supplied Stéphane Mahe on the left and the Frenchman's centre was so precise that McNamara had time to pick his corner before making the header. Calmly and deliberately, the midfielder put the ball back across the goal and wide of the far post.

Celtic (4-4-2): Gould; Annoni, Rieper, Stubbs, Mahe; McNamara, Burley, Lambert, Wieghorst; Larsson, Brattbakk. **Aberdeen** (4-4-2): Leighton; Smith, Whyte, Inglis, Kirkalov; Rowson, O'Neill, O'Neill, Glass; Jess, Newell. **Referee** S Dougal (Burnside).

Burns set to replace sacked Duffy at Hibernian

TOMMY BURNS is expected to be named manager of Hibernian today, 24 hours after the sacking of Jim Duffy, *writes Patrick Glenn.*

It is believed Burns, who became Newcastle's coach last summer after being sacked by Celtic, has agreed terms with Hibs' chairman Lex Gold and will take charge of the side for Saturday's match against Aberdeen at Pittodrie.

Burns's wife and family live in the Glasgow area and in the past few months he has made no secret of his desire to return to Scotland.

He recently lost his licence, when he was found to be over the alcohol limit, making commuting to St James' Park more difficult.

At Easter Road, Burns will recreate his partnership with Billy McNeill, under whom he served as a player with Celtic. McNeill was appointed general manager of Hibs 12 days ago and made caretaker yesterday when Duffy was fired.

Dalglish in the hunt for Babbel

Ian Ross and Martin Thorpe

NEWCASTLE UNITED reached agreement with Bayern Munich over the German international Markus Babbel as their latest offer of £5 million for Gary Speed was rejected by Everton's manager Howard Kendall yesterday.

But the £5 million-rated Babbel's move to St James' Park is far from assured. Kenny Dalglish will be uncomfortable with a wage demand similar to the £30,000-a-week figure that scuppered the defender's move to Manchester United last year. And news of the agreement is likely to attract interest from other teams, including United and Tottenham Hotspur.

Dalglish still hopes to sign Speed by the end of the week, allowing him to play in the FA Cup fifth-round tie against Tranmere Rovers on Saturday week — provided that Stevenage are overcome tomorrow. Kendall is likely to accept an offer of £5.5 million despite quoting Newcastle £6.5 million four days ago.

Everton will probably fine their captain two weeks' wages after he took no part in Saturday's Premiership match at West Ham. "I apologise to my team-mates and the supporters," said Speed. "I let them down."

Dalglish will also discuss personal terms with Aberdeen's midfielder Stephen Glass this week.

Manchester United's assistant manager Brian Kidd is due in Italy this week to watch Udinese's German international striker Oliver Bierhoff, Serie A's joint top-scorer with 14 goals. Bierhoff is 29 and would command a fee of around £5 million.

Italian reports add that Alex Ferguson's brother Peter, who does scouting work for United, was in Italy on Sunday to look at Brescia's Dario Hubner, a 30-year-old striker who has scored 11 goals this season.

The Barnsley manager Danny Wilson has not been reported to the FA for calling the referee Jeff Winter "inept" after his side's 2-0 defeat at Chelsea on Saturday. Tomorrow's FA Cup fourth-round replay at Oakwell will not feature the Spurs midfielder Andy Sinton, who has damaged knee ligaments.

Tranmere's 31-year-old defender Andy Thorn has been forced to retire by a persistent knee injury.

Premier profits soar

John Duncan

THE Premier League has doubled its turnover in the past year to a staggering £120 million, according to its annual report published today. Money from television and sponsorship amounted to £120.6 million in 1997, up from £64.9 million.

The Premier League acts as a distributing company for its clubs — there are 20 shares worth £1 which relegated clubs must sell to promoted clubs at face value at the end of the season. The leap in turnover is mainly due to the new four-year £743 million TV deal with Sky and the BBC.

Manchester United benefited most from the £83 million distributed from the TV deal, netting £6.3 million, with the worst paid, Coventry City, receiving £3.1 million.

The report, sent to clubs yesterday, paints a rosy picture of the Premiership, with attendances up for the fourth year running at an average of 28,434, which means Premier League grounds are operating at 89 per cent capacity.

The new chairman Peter Leaver sets great store by the commitment to youth football and grassroots work. The Premier League will give £5 million to the Football Trust this year and £7.5 million to the Professional Footballers' Association.

Durkin's World Cup call

PAUL DURKIN, who started his career in 1974, has been named as the English referee for the World Cup. The Fifa Referees' Committee has chosen 34 referees and 33 assistants for the tournament from June 10-July 12.

"It is going to be hard work at the World Cup, it is no holiday, but I am absolutely delighted," Durkin said. "It has long been a dream of mine to referee at a World Cup and it is an honour to represent my country.

"I was aware I was in the frame, but with only one selected you never like to take it for granted. I have been a Fifa official since 1994 and now I have my chance I just want to go out there and perform to the best of my ability."

Hugh Dallas from Motherwell is the one Scottish referee, while England's Mark Warren will be an assistant referee.

● The Brazilian midfielder Juninho is likely to miss the World Cup after breaking his left leg and straining ankle ligaments during Atletico Madrid's 1-1 with Celta Vigo. He will be out of action for four months.

● Jürgen Klinsmann was yesterday included in a 40-man Germany squad to prepare for the World Cup finals.

Results

Football

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE
Premier Division
Celtic (2) 3 — Aberdeen (1) 1
Wieghorst 21, Larsson 35, Jackson 82 — Rowson 8
46,606

PONTINS LEAGUE: First Division: Leicester 4, Wolverhampton 1, Man City 0, Oldham 4. **Second Division:** Bradford 4, Wrexham 1.
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Chelsea 5, Oxford Utd 0, Norwich 0, Tottenham 4.
CONCACAF GOLD CUP: First round Group 3: US 3, Cuba 0. **Group 4:** Guatemala 0, El Salvador 0
FA TROPHY THIRD ROUND DRAW: Grantham Tn v Hednesford Tn; Hyde Utd v Dover Ath; Stevenage Bor v Gloucester C or Burton Alb; Halifax Tn or Slough Tn v Boreham Wood; Barrow v Northwich; Altrincham v Southport; Hayes v Bashley; Ashton Utd v Cheltenham Tn. (To be played Feb 21).

Rugby League

SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP DRAW: Fourth round: Egremont v Workington; Barrow v Widnes; Lancs Lynx v Dewsbury; Halifax v Huddersfield; Leeds v Castleford; Batley v London; Leigh v Sheffield, Wakefield v Warrington; Featherstone Lions v Hull KR; Bramborough v Hunslet; Rochdale v Bradford; Swinton v York; Ovenden v Salford; Whitehaven v Hull, Keighley v Wigan; Featherstone v St Helens. (To be played Feb 14-15)

Tennis

ATP MARSEILLE OPEN: First round: M-K Goellner (Ger) bt A Gaudenzi (It) 7-6, 6-2; **A Portas** (Sp) bt A Lopez-Moron (Sp) 6-3, 6-3.
CROATIA ATP INDOORS (Split): **First round: J Novak** (Cz) bt J Knippschild (Ger) 6-3, 6-7, 7-5; **A Medvedev** (Ukr) bt A Calatrava (Sp) 6-7, 7-6, 6-3; **M Alvarez** (Sp) bt F Vicenis (Sp) 6-4, 6-2; **G Ivanisevic** (Cro) bt D Prinosil (Ger) 7-6, 6-4; **R Schuettler** (Ger) bt T Henman (GB) 6-3, 1-6, 6-3.

Basketball

NATIONAL LEAGUE: First Division: Men: Brixton 104, Plymouth 138. **Women:** Sheffield 72, Northampton 76, Thames Valley 64, C Palace 53.
NBA: New York 95, Miami 83. LA Lakers 112, Chicago 87; Minnesota 110, Milwaukee 118, Boston 107, Houston 96; Golden State 86, Utah 115; Sacramento 37, San Antonio 103; Portland 97, Toronto 90; LA Clippers 93, Indiana 99; Seattle 97, New Jersey 87. **Leading standings Eastern Conference: Atlantic Division:** 1, Miami (W27–L17–Pct.614–GB0). 2, New York (25–19–.568–2); 3, New Jersey (26–20–.565–2). **Central Division:** 1, Indiana (W32–L12–Pct.727–GB0), 2, Chicago (33–14–.702–½); 3, Atlanta (28–18–.609–5). **Western Conference: Midwest Division:** 1, San Antonio (W33–L14–Pct.702–GB0); 2, Utah (30–14–.682–1½); 3, Minnesota (25–19–.568–6½). **Pacific Division:** 1, Seattle (W36–L10–Pct.783–GB0); 2, LA Lakers (33–L11–.750–2); 3, Phoenix (29–14–.674–6½)

Chess

HOOGOVENS GRANDMASTERS (Wijk aan Zee, Neth): **Round 12:** L van Wely (Neth) 0, J Piket (Neth) 1; V Salov (Rus) 0, J Timman (Neth) 1. **Draws:** V Anand (Ind) v A Shirov (Sp), V Topalov (Bul) v B Gelfand (Belarus), J Polgar (Hun) v M Adams (Eng), P van der Sterren (Neth) v F Nijboer (Neth), A Karpov (Rus) v V Kramnik (Rus). **Final scores:** Anand, Kramnik 8½; Adams, Shirov, Timman 7½; Gelfand, Karpov, Piket, Polgar, Topalov 6½.

Cricket

TOUR MATCH (Kimberley, SA; third day): Pakistan 418–8 dec and 216–9 dec (Aamir Sohail 61, Kruis 4–41). Griqualand West 218 (Mushtaq Ahmed 6–63).
SUPERSPORT SERIES (Port Elizabeth): Border 220 and 144 (Baptiste 4–28, Love 4–56) Eastern Province 514–5 dec. Eastern Province won by an innings and 150 runs.

Ice Hockey

EXPRESS CUP: Bracknell 7, Nottingham 2.
SUPERLEAGUE: Cardiff 0, Ayr 1; Manchester 6, Basingstoke 3; Newcastle 3, Sheffield 5.
BRITISH NATIONAL LEAGUE: Kingston 7, Paisley 5; Lancashire 5, Fife 9; Murrayfield 1, Guildford 6; Slough 1, Peterborough 4.
SOUTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE: Telford 18, Cardiff 0.
NHL: Washington 2, Detroit 4; NY Islanders 2, Boston 3 (ot); Florida 2, Buffalo 5; Carolina 3, Montreal 8; Anaheim 4, Chicago 3 (ot). **Leading standings Eastern Conference: NE Division:** 1, Pittsburgh (W29–L15–T10–GF152–GA122–Pts68); 2, Montreal (28–19–7–185–133–63); 3, Boston (23–20–10–136–130–56). **Atlantic Division:** 1, New Jersey (W31–L16–T6–GF152–GA108–Pts68); 2, Philadelphia (28–15–5–162–117–61); 3, Washington (25–18–10–151–137–62). **Western Conference: Central Division:** 1, Dallas (W33–L13–T8–GF165–GA113–Pts74) 2, Detroit (30–14–11–170–127–71); 3, St Louis (28–20–6–164–140–54) **Pacific Division:** 1, Colorado (W26–L13–T16–GF163–GA133–Pts68); 2, Los Angeles (23–19–9–147–139–55); 3, San Jose (20–25–7–129–139–47).

Snooker

BENSON AND HEDGES MASTERS (Wembley): **First round: S Lee** (Eng) bt J White (Eng) 5–1. **Second round: J Wattana** (Thai) bt J Parrott (Eng) 5–5

Sailing

WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE: Fifth leg positions (6,670 nautical miles from Auckland to Sao Sebastian, Br). 1, Merit Cup (Mon) 6,469.8 miles to finish; 2, Chessie Racing (US) 0.7 miles behind, 3, Swedish Match (Swe) 1.8; 4, Silk Cut (GB) 6.6; 5, Toshiba (US) 7.1; 6, EF Education (Swe) 8.6; 7, EF Language (Swe) 9.0; 8, Innovation Kvaerner (Nor) 10.4; 9, Brunel/Eurocopy (Neth) 16.4

Squash

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (Manchester): **Finals: Men: Over-35:** P Whitlock (Devon) bt B Beeson (Northumbria) 9–1, 9–3, 10–8. **Women: S Wright** (Kent) bt C Jackman (Norfolk) 3–9, 9–3, 9–1, 9–2.

Fixtures

(7.45 unless stated)

FA CUP: Fourth round replays: Reading v Cardiff; Sheff Utd v Ipswich; Wolverhampton v Charlton.
AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD: Northern Section, quarter-finals: Burnley v Carlisle.
NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Second Division: Blackpool v Bristol C (7.30). **Third Division:** Doncaster v Mansfield (7.30).
TENNENTS SCOTTISH CUP: Third round replays: Ross County v Alloa (7.30).
SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Second Division: Brechin v Queen of South (7.30). **Postponed:** Livingston v Inverness Cal. **Third Division: Postponed:** Cowdenbeath v Albion.
FA TROPHY: Second round replays: Slough v Halifax, Burton Alb v Gloucester (7.30)
REPRESENTATIVE MATCH: FA XI v British Isles (7.30).
UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier Division: Postponed: Leigh RMI v Colwyn Bay. **First Division:** Stocksbridge PS v Belper Tn. **President's Cup: Second round:** Guiseley v Leigh RMI (7.30). **Replay:** Blyth Spartans v Boston Utd (7.30).
RYMAN LEAGUE: First Division: Thame Utd v Billericay Tn; Abingdon Tn v Bognor Regis Tn. **Second Division:** Leighton Tn v Braintree Tn; Wealdstone v Witham Tn. **Third Division:** Aveley v Hertford Tn; Croydon Ath v Camberley Tn; Epsom & Ewell v Blackwell Hth. **Trophy: Third round:** Northwood v Canvey Is.
DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Southern Division: Postponed: Fleet Tn v Bashley. **Cup: Third round:** Redditch Utd v Stourbridge (7.30). **Fourth round:** Moor Green v Ilkeston Tn (7.30); Dorchester v Bashley, Margate v Cambridge City.
M-W COUNTIES LEAGUE: Floodlit Trophy: Third round: Kidsgrove Ath v Glossop.
NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier Division: Arnold Tn v Eccleshill Utd; Hallfield Main v North Ferriby Utd; Hucknall Tn v Ossett Alb; Liversedge v Thackley.
SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier Division: Bedworth Utd v Chippenham Tn; Melksham Tn v Taunton Tn.
PONTINS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Leeds v Notts F (7.0). **First Division:** Grimsby v Bolton (7.0)
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Arsenal v QPR (2.0).

Ice Hockey

BRITISH NATIONAL LEAGUE: Paisley v Murrayfield (7.0).
SOUTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE: Guildford v Peterborough (8.0).

Squash

Wright keeps her title safe

Richard Jago

SUE WRIGHT became the first player for 11 years to retain a national title when she overcame her close rival Cassie Jackman in the final of the British closed event, sponsored by Business Pages. Wright has now captured the title three times — on the three occasions the tournament has been held in Manchester.

The world No. 3 from Kent beat the world No. 4 3–9, 9–3, 9–1, 9–2, in a match which slid away from Jackman with surprising rapidity after several refereeing decisions had gone against her.

Jackman hurt her hand in a collision midway through the second game, and a point later the referee allowed a rally to go on even though one of Wright's drives appeared to touch the tin.

Early in the fourth game a Jackman volley-drop was called down when she thought it was up, and shortly afterwards the former champion got only a let when Wright clearly picked up a double bounce.

Jackman was also irritated by two penalty points against her, but arguing with the referee brought the response: "You are clearing into her line."

"I wasn't playing very well this week until tonight, so it feels wonderful," said Wright, who seemed recovered from a blow on the head in the semi-finals which halted her for more than 15 minutes.

Snooker

Wattana rally sickens Parrott

Clive Everton

JAMES WATTANA brought his dormant season to life yesterday with three centuries in four frames as he turned a 4–0 deficit into a 6–5 win over John Parrott for a place in the quarter-finals of the Benson & Hedges Masters at Wembley Conference Centre.

Thailand's No. 1 sometimes handicaps himself by flying in from Bangkok shortly before a match, but he has been at his British base in Bradford for the past fortnight.

The benefits of this were not apparent as Parrott progressed smoothly to 4–0 with breaks of 59, 51, 49 and 78, but a different Wattana re-emerged from the mid-session interval. He started with a total clearance of 133, scraped the sixth frame, and followed with two more centuries, 100 and 113, to draw level at 4–4.

Parrott won the ninth frame but frame-winning runs of 60 and 71 saw Wattana to an unlikely victory.

"I've been practising really hard for the last couple of weeks so I couldn't understand why I was 4–0 down," he said. "This has to be one of my best-ever comebacks."

Jimmy White, Masters champion in 1984 but no longer an automatic starter, did not make the most of his sponsor's wild card. He went down 5–1 in 74 minutes to the fast improving Stephen Lee, who will be Stephen Hendry's first opponent tomorrow.

"I can't remember playing worse here," sighed White.

Sport in brief

Olympic Games

Juan Antonio Samaranch, the International Olympic Committee chairman, has criticised some sports bodies for failing to tackle drug abuse. He also told IOC members in Nagano, where the Winter Olympics start this weekend, that more women should run international and national sport to match the increase in female Games competitors.

He said: "There are many sports organisations which have taken no measures to combat this scourge [drug-taking]. For us the fight against doping continues, in order to protect the health of the athletes and uphold medical and sports ethics."

Hockey

Slough, hoping to repeat last season's indoor-outdoor double, won all three of their matches in the Women's National Indoor League Championship play-offs at Crystal Palace to retain their title and qualify for Europe next season, *writes Pat Rowley.* In the decisive final match, they beat Chelmsford 7–3 with a late of flurry of goals, Ireland's Sarah Kelleher scoring three and England's Sam Wright two.

Chess

Britain's No. 1 Michael Adams moved closer to the world top 10 yesterday when he shared third prize at Wijk aan Zee in the first major grandmaster tournament of the year, *writes Leonard Barden.* Vlad Kramnik of Russia and Vishy Anand of India, ranked second and third in the world, shared the £5,000 first prize but Adams was only a point behind.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

1	Barnsley	v Everton	2
2	Blackburn	v Tottenham	1
3	Coventry	v Sheff Wed	1
4	Derby	v Aston Villa	1
5	Leicester	v Leeds	x
6	Liverpool	v Southampton	1
7	Man Utd	v Bolton	1
8	Newcastle	v West Ham	1

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION

9	Birmingham	v Middlesbrough	x
10	Bradford C	v Charlton	2
11	Bury	v Port Vale	x
12	Huddersfield	v Stockport	x
13	Norwich	v Man C	1
14	Portsmouth	v Notts Forest	2
15	QPR	v Crewe	1
16	Reading	v Tranmere	1
17	Sheff Utd	v Oxford	1
18	Stoke	v Ipswich	1
19	Swindon	v West Brom	1
20	Wolves	v Sunderland	x

SECOND DIVISION

21	Bournemouth	v Bristol C	x
22	Bristol Rvrs	v Chesterfield	1
23	Fulham	v Southend	1
24	Millwall	v Grimsby	x
25	Oldham	v Blackpool	1
26	Plymouth	v Carlisle	1
27	Preston	v Burnley	x
28	Wigan	v Northampton	2
29	Wrexham	v Luton	1
30	Wycombe	v Brentford	1
31	York	v Walsall	1

THIRD DIVISION

32	Brighton	v Torquay	x
33	Cambridge	v Doncaster	1
34	Cardiff	v Lincoln	1
35	Chester	v Mansfield	1
36	Hartlepool	v Darlington	x
37	Hull	v Rochdale	1
38	Macclesfield	v Scarborough	1
39	Notts Co	v Shrewsbury	1

BELL'S SCOTTISH PREMIER DIVISION

40	Aberdeen	v Hibernian	x
41	Dundee Utd	v Motherwell	1
42	Kilmarnock	v St Johnstone	1
43	Rangers	v Dunfermline	1

SCOTTISH FIRST DIVISION

44	Airdrie	v Hamilton	2
45	Falkirk	v Morton	1
46	Raith Rvrs	v Partick	1
47	St Mirren	v Ayr Utd	1
48	Stirling A	v Dundee	2

SCOTTISH SECOND DIVISION

49	Brechin	v East Fife	2

Team talk
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Aston Villa	61	Hudd. Town	74	Rangers	87
Barnsley	62	Ipswich Town	75	Sheffield United	88
Birm. City	63	Leeds United	76	Sheffield Wed.	89
Blackburn	64	Leicester City	77	Southampton	90
Bolton	65	Liverpool	78	Spurs	91
Brentford	66	Man. City	79	Stoke City	92
Burnley	67	Man. United	80	Sunderland	93
Celtic	68	Middlesbrough	81	West Ham	94
Chelsea	69	Millwall	82	Wimbledon	95
Coventry City	70	Newcastle Utd	83	Wolves	96
Crystal Palace	71	Norwich City	84		
Derby County	72	Nottm. Forest	85		

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Rugby Union

England put pace before strategy

Robert Armstrong fears that Woodward's selection for Paris could well self-destruct

ENGLAND have taken a major gamble with a number of potentially self-destructive selections as they set off in pursuit of their first win in six matches in Saturday's Five Nations opener against France in Paris.

Although the coach Clive Woodward has the final say in team matters, his latest line-up is unconvincing and smacks of the bad old days of selection by RFU committee when England made a habit of coming second.

Players have been picked out of position while others have been dropped without good reason for a game that England badly need to win to have a realistic chance of regaining the Five Nations title.

The modish obsession with raw pace at the expense of an effective strategy offers more hostages to fortune than England's creaky defence can safely accommodate.

Mike Catt, a fly-half, has been chosen at full-back; Austin Healey, now recognised as a scrum-half, gets another cap on the wing; and Richard Hill, an open-side flanker, is picked at No. 8. England in fact include two open-sides with Neil Back keeping his place at No. 7, a position the captain Lawrence Dallaglio used to occupy before he settled for the blind-side job.

Jeremy Guscott, who has played only two games this season, returns at centre after a back injury despite looking short of match fitness in Bath's European Cup triumph. Mark Regan, whose line-out throws these days find the opposition with unerring accuracy, returns at hooker, a decision forced on Woodward by Richard Cockerill's knee injury.

There is no place for the Bath full-back Matt Perry nor his centre team-mate Phil de Glanville, who both performed honourably in the 26-26 draw with New Zealand before Christmas. Tim Rodber, a mainstay of last summer's Lions success in South Africa, is again overlooked at No. 8, despite his compelling form for Northampton.

Likewise Danny Grewcock of Saracens is unlucky to miss out on a second-row berth, while the veteran prop Jason Leonard, who recently complained of burn-out, remains in the front row.

Woodward appeared to concede that Guscott might not last the full 80 minutes at Stade de France, frost permitting. "I genuinely think Jerry is match fit but if we don't think he is we can change things," he said. "Jerry is a genuine outside-centre and Mike Catt is one of the world-class fullbacks. They are very pacy players and they'll bring a bit of extra experience to the side.

"Mike will get his hands on the ball. I'm very confident about what he can bring to the team. He can play anywhere in the back division. I think it's old-fashioned to ask what is a player's best position; in the modern game a player needs to be able to play in two or three positions."

At least there can be no complaints about the half-backs, Paul Grayson and Kyran Bracken, who have been dominant in club rugby in the past two months. There will also be widespread relief that Dallaglio, who has been hampered by a painful shoulder, has been passed fit. The England captain will carry major defensive responsibilities in the absence of a back-row destroyer.

Woodward does have a fair sprinkling of experience in his side but the critical shortcoming is the lack of proven specialists in several key positions. Catt has not played at full-back for almost two years.

Hill is a gifted all-round footballer yet the demands on a Test No. 8 nowadays are so rigorous and specific technically that it might have been wiser to pick his Saracens team-mate Tony Diprose or Rodber, or even Newcastle's Dean Ryan, for a task that they carry out week in, week out.

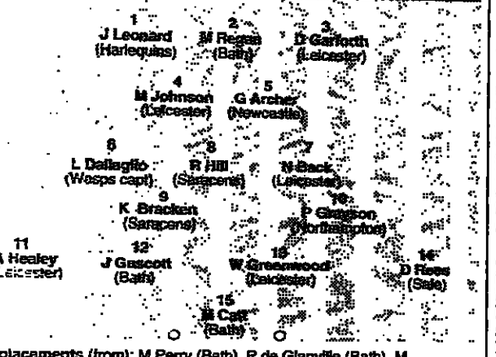
"We didn't spend a lot of time talking about the back row," Woodward admitted. "It's a key part of our game and I thought we were outstanding in that area against the All Blacks. Reports are coming in that Rodber and Diprose are playing very well but we're happy with the guys we've picked."

England, however, will only get good value out of Guscott if they can clear the ball away rapidly from the breakdown and put the Bath centre into space. The problem is that Paris has come a fortnight too early for a player who is still finding his bearings after a seven-month lay-off.

If Woodward had genuine doubts about de Glanville, then he ought to have drafted in Northampton's Matt Allen, by some distance the outstanding centre in the Premiership.

● Garryowen's scrum-half Steve McIvor replaces the injured Niall Hogan on the Ireland bench for Saturday's meeting with Scotland.

England team



Replacements (from): M Perry (Bath), P de Glanville (Bath), M Dawson (Northampton), G Rowntree (Leicester), D West (Leicester), D Grewcock (Saracens), T Rodber (Northampton), T Diprose (Saracens).

Stade de France, Paris. Saturday 2.0



Bye bye . . . Mark Ramprakash, centre, expected a leading role but finds himself among the extras LAURENCE GRIFFITHS

Ramprakash out in the cold

Mike Selvey in Port of Spain believes the Middlesex captain is being ignored by Mike Atherton and that the tour party is split

WHEN last Thursday morning Mark Butcher trudged back to the Sabina Park pavilion after punching away to third slip a delivery from Courtney Walsh that threatened to rip out his larynx, he might have considered himself unlucky on several counts.

Despite the fact that he had not batted competitively since his final innings of last season for Surrey on September 20, he had been expected, in the aftermath of Jack Russell's gastric illness, to go in first wicket down on a minefield against a brace of pace bowlers with 600-odd Test wickets between them.

It has to be asked why he was playing at all when the form that he had shown in practice had not remotely matched that of Mark Ramprakash.

The case of Ramprakash is mystifying. After his poor tour of South Africa three winters ago, his England career appeared in jeopardy. Although his talent was not in question, there were doubts about his ability to translate his game to the international arena.

But high-class form for Middlesex and a maturing personality persuaded more enlightened selectors to allow him back into the clan. Without his runs in the second innings of the final Test against Australia at The Oval last season, England would not have won the game and Atherton would not be captain.

On the back of that, he might reasonably have expected to be playing in the first game of the tour against Jamaica at Montego Bay with the prospect of keeping his place. So his awkwardness and disappointment can only be imagined when it became apparent that John Crawley, albeit down the order at No. 6, and Adam Hollioake (not to mention Butcher) had jumped the queue.

What happened between The Oval and the Caribbean smacks of the captain's autocracy on tour. For last summer's home Tests neither Mike Atherton nor David Lloyd had a selectorial vote, although they would have had some input. Here the situation is the reverse, with teams chosen by captain, vice-captain and coach.

The implication is that Atherton, who has scarcely demonstrated confidence in Ramprakash in the past, is overriding the selectors' views. He is also making a statement, effectively saying that Ramprakash is in the touring party against his better judgment and that the chances of him playing a part are slim.

Two of the three home selectors, Mike Gatting and Graham Gooch, who are with the A team, are spitting nails, with the phone lines between Sri Lanka and the Caribbean running hot.

So while the in-crowd have been playing in Pointe à Pierre in preparation for the "second" Test, Ramprakash — with Butcher, Ashley Cowan and Chris Silverwood — has been trying to keep his hand in at Queen's Park Oval, knowing that at 28 his international career is slipping away again.

There is little to do but work and try to be philosophical. But that is easier said than done. Practice facilities have not been good, but at least yesterday they had use of the grass nets they had been promised by the West Indies board for Sunday but which were not prepared in time. On that occasion the batsmen had to hit in a concrete net and the bowlers delivered from the equivalent of a sand pit.

For players such as Ramprakash who already realise the direction in which things are heading, it just adds to the demoralisation and discontent. Home seems a long way away and already the touring party is factional.

Cricket

Tour match

Trinidad v England XI

Croft plan goes clang

ROBERT CROFT's mission to bowl himself into the second of the two Port of Spain Tests was not a complete success at Guaracara Park yesterday. The sound of the Trinidad batsman Lincoln Roberts hoisting a ball from Croft with a clang on to the corrugated-iron roof of a local sports club was hardly music to the ears of the Glamorgan off-spinner, who remained wicketless after 21 overs that cost 71 runs.

That six signalled the end of his third spell and when Andy Caddick replaced the Welshman at the Oil Refinery end he immediately broke a stand of 105 between Roberts and Phil Simmons, who had held up England's progress since before lunch.

There is a theory evolving that Croft might squeeze his way into the second of the back-to-back Tests at Queen's Park Oval if the adjacent pitch becomes scuffed up by the movement of players during the hastily-arranged initial Test there, starting on Thursday.

Instead the front-line pacemen proved the more successful, with Caddick claiming three for 38, Dean Headley two for 34 and Angus Fraser removing Daren Ganga with his second ball. Roberts had made 60 when he drove at Caddick and Graham Thorpe clung on to a splendid catch at first slip with the ball almost past him. With Simmons he had detained England for 31 overs after Trinidad found themselves struggling at 92 for five and technically in danger of being asked to follow on.

ENGLAND
First innings
(Tea, first day: 262-5)

N Hussain c Ramnarine b Samaroo	66
†R C Russell c Ragamoottoo b Samaroo	77
R D B Croft lbw b Samaroo	13
A R Caddick not out	2
D W Headley c Ragamoottoo b Ramnarine	0
A R C Fraser lbw b Samaroo	3
Extras (b4, lb3, w5, nb11)	23
Total (86 overs)	381

Fall of wickets cont: 231, 328, 344, 348.
Bowlings: Francis 13–3–68–0; Bishop 10–0–54–0, Simmons 4–1–10–0; Ramnarine 30–3–72–5; Samaroo 21–3–97–4; Rampersad 8–0–49–1.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
First innings

S Ragamoottoo lbw b Caddick	15
D Ganga lbw b Fraser	41
B Rampersad c Crawley b Caddick	0
R Smith lbw b Headley	22
L Roberts c Thorpe b Caddick	60
†D Williams c Hussain b Headley	0
*P V Simmons not out	46
A Samaroo not out	3
Extras (b4, lb12, nb14)	30
Total (for 6, 84 overs: 198)	217

Fall of wickets: 30, 39, 90, 90, 92, 207.
To bat: N B Francis, I R Bishop, D Ramnarine.
Bowlings: Caddick 12–1–38–3; Headley 12–3–34–2; Croft 21–5–71–0; Fraser 10–0–27–1; Hollioake 9–0–31–0.
Umpires: T Birbal and E Ali.

Perry suffers meltdown

Robert Kitson on a bad six days for the golden boy dropped by Bath and England

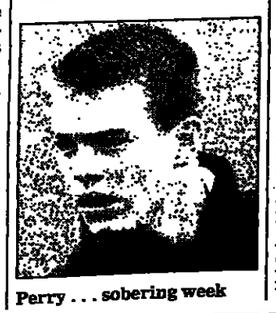
A BUMPY landing for the golden boy. Dropped twice in the space of six days by club and country, Matt Perry now knows what it feels like when high-flying youth strays too close to the sun and the wax wings start to melt.

Last week he had the pain of missing out to the eventual match-winner Jon Callard for Bath's European final against Brive; yesterday England pulled Mike Catt out of the hat at full-back to face France in Paris to complete his sudden descent.

Perry had barely any time to celebrate his 21st birthday last Tuesday, but the anniversary has brought him no luck. He did little wrong and much more right against the All Blacks at Twickenham, earning his coach praise for having the courage of his selectorial convictions. Fat good it's done Perry.

Perry is taking it on the chin. "The worst thing you can do is get down about it," he said. "It is disappointing, though, because I was looking forward to playing in the Five Nations."

Woodward did little to soften the landing. "It was a difficult decision. I didn't expect him to be jumping up and down about it but he took it fine. He's obviously disappointed but that's what it's all about. He'll be bigger for it," said the England coach.



Perry . . . sobering week

Perry has already seen at first hand the misfortune of his former flatmate Andy Long, picked in the front row against Australia last autumn only to suffer a drastic freefall down the rankings scarcely softened by the captaincy of the England Under-21 team this Friday. Against Brive, Long was not even on the bench and the climb back may take some time.

Perhaps he and Perry should have foreseen it all. We tend to remain suspicious of English boy wonders, concerned lest they develop the tell-tale symptoms of complacency too early.

Look no further than Perry's one-time schoolboy cricketing team-mate Ben Hollioake, lauded for flaying the Aussies all over Lord's last summer but having to be content with an A team spot this winter. Perry can at least look forward to a seat on the replacements bench and, according to Woodward, a probable walk-on role in the big picture.

Sri Lanka A v England A: First Test, third day

No satisfaction on feather bed

David Hopps in Kurunegala

THE Kama Sutra film may be the current attraction at the Imperial Theatre here but down the road at the Welagedera Stadium there is only one position to choose from, and that is a certain draw.

After three days of this four-day match, Sri Lanka A have answered England A's 385 with 341 for eight, and if the spectators are close to cracking up with boredom, the pitch undoubtedly is not. Refusing to take its cue from the Kama Sutra, all it has done is roll over and go to sleep.

All eight A Tests between the two countries in the past decade have finished in draws and a ninth seems inevitable. When Ranjit Fernando, Sri Lanka's team manager, was asked in mid-afternoon if his side might declare behind to throw the game open, his laughter was so uproarious that a young orange seller was almost startled into dropping his basket down a grassy bank.

England had imagined that, once the ball began to turn, dismissing the Sri Lankans would be more like peeling a satsuma; one breakthrough and everything would fall apart. But the two left-arm spinners, Ashley Giles and Dean Cosker, had a frustrating day and, apart from a brief foray after lunch, were never bowled in tandem.

Giles delivered 33 of England's 90 overs yesterday without taking a wicket, his greatest threat being a quicker ball delivered at startling speed. He was frustrated by several batpad and leg-before appeals that were turned down but, in giving only the obvious, the umpires have at least been scrupulously consistent.

Cosker was limited to 12 overs. With his rolling, stiff-legged gait and trousers billowing in the fresh breeze, which every afternoon has rushed over Turtle Rock, he suggests from afar that he is steeped in the first-class game.

Actually, his experience for Glamorgan is limited to one full season and, of the two left-arm spinners, he was treated as the understudy, even after a success in the first over after lunch when Naweed Nawaz chanced his arm against extra flight and was bowled.

Outside the ground a raucous crowd demonstrated in favour of Sri Lanka's deputy defence minister, who has offered his resignation in the wake of the terrorist attack on the Temple of the Tooth. The demonstration of defence inside the ground was left to Mahela Jayawardene, whose assiduous 110 in 4½ hours finally came to grief against the left-arm pace bowler Paul Hutchison. He was held back until after tea but then had Jayawardene caught at mid-on with the second new ball.

Hutchison also had Upul Chandana caught at the wicket as he tried a leg glance and when two wickets for Mark Ealham left Sri Lanka 296 for eight, there was a sliver of hope for England.

Instead, the tail held out in the final hour. The most startled spectator in that time was a most unfortunate snake, hit by the ball as it crossed the outfield before making a surly retreat into the undergrowth.

ENGLAND A: First Innings 385 (M A Ealham 87, N V Knight 85, B C Hollioake 67, D L Maddy 50; Perera 3-63).

SRI LANKA A
First innings (overnight: 105-2)

*M S Atapattu c Flintoff b Ormond	52
M Jayawardene c Cosker b Hutchison	110
N Nawaz b Cosker	31
†L de Silva c Giles b Ealham	38
U D U Chandana c Read b Hutchison	6
T Samaraweera lbw b Ealham	1
N Villaverayan not out	36
D Hettiarachi not out	0
Extras (b3, lb16, w1, nb16)	36
Total (for 8, 117 overs)	341

Fall of wickets cont: 126, 183, 254, 280, 289, 295.
To bat: S Perera.
Bowlings: Hollioake 19–4–51–0; Hutchison 17–6–43–3; Ormond 16–2–67–2; Giles 39–12–73–0, Cosker 11–0–38–1; Ealham 15–4–50–2.
Umpires: G Pushparajah and S D S Dissanayake.

Australia v S Africa: Third Test, fourth day

Kirsten gets his name on the wall

Andy Wilson in Adelaide

GARY KIRSTEN's stylish century yesterday was significant for a number of reasons. The left-handed opener had already made five Test centuries but this was his first against Australia on possibly his last visit, and it came at the brisk tempo South Africa needed to give themselves a chance of squaring the series.

The innings also saved Kirsten A$1,000 (about £400) by earning him a place on one of the honours boards which bedeck the walls of the Adelaide Oval's Chappell Bar and Bradman Room, listing players who have scored centuries or taken five wickets here. At the start of play he had stood to lose a bet with Shaun Pollock after the young paceman's seven-wicket haul on Sunday.

Kirsten's feat followed Mark Taylor's historic effort for Australia, which ended earlier with him carrying his bat for 169 after his last-wicket partner Stuart MacGill was dismissed in the day's 11th over.

How a third left-handed opener, Matt Elliott, must envy the centurions. In the 17 overs possible after South Africa's second-innings declaration on 193 for six, the Victorian suffered his fifth failure of the series.

Taylor chopped on to his stumps shortly afterwards and at 32 for two Australia were left with an uphill fifth-day fight to preserve their 1–0 series lead.

At tea, with the score on 144 for two and the lead 311 runs, the tourists' captain Hansie Cronje looked well-placed to declare early. But he soon lobbed a catch to Shane Warne at mid-on and, with the debutant leg-spinner MacGill then taking three wickets in six balls, Cronje was indebted to a perky partnership between Kirsten and Jonty Rhodes which allowed him to declare just before 5pm.

MacGill, whose figures of three for 11 gave him five wickets for the match, gives the ball a real "rip" though he currently lacks Shane Warne's variety.

Taylor, having been on the field throughout the game, was unlucky to get a short ball from Lance Klusener which kept very low. The wretched Elliott, looking a shadow of the player who excelled in England last summer, is now expected to make way for Michael Slater on the forthcoming tour of India.

SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings 517 (B M McMillan 87no, G Kirsten 77, W J Cronje 73, P L Symcox 54).

AUSTRALIA
First innings (overnight: 327-9)

*M Taylor not out	169
S MacGill b Symcox	10
Extras (lb12, nb5, b2)	19
Total (122.5 overs)	350

Fall of wicket cont: 317.
Bowlings: Pollock 41–11–87–7, McMillan 23–5–60–0, Kallis 18–5–45–1, Klusener 27–65–104–1, Symcox 13.5–3–40–1.

SOUTH AFRICA
Second innings

G Kirsten not out	108
A Bacher c MacGill b Warne	41
J Kallis b Kasprowicz	15
H Cronje c Warne b Kasprowicz	5
L Klusener b MacGill	0
P Symcox C Healy b MacGill	2
H Gibbs st Healy b MacGill	2
J Rhodes not out	19
Extras (nb-1)	1
Total (for 6 dec, 58 overs)	193

Fall of wickets: 80, 133, 155, 155, 157, 165
Did not bat: B McMillan, S Pollock, D Richardson.
Bowlings: Kasprowicz 18–5–55–2, Bichel 14–2–51–0, S Waugh 4–1–13–0, Warne 16–2–52–1, MacGill 7–1–22–3.

AUSTRALIA
Second innings

M Elliott c Richardson b Pollock	4
*M Taylor b Klusener	6
G Blewett not out	9
M Waugh not out	11
Extras (2nb)	2
Total (for 2, 17 overs)	32

Fall of wickets: 8, 17.
Bowlings: Shaun Pollock 6-2-11-1 (1nb), Lance Klusener 5-2-12-1 (1nb), Jacques Kallis 4-3-1-0, Pat Symcox 2-0-8-0.
To bat: S R Waugh, R T Ponting, †I A Healy, A J Bichel, S K Warne, M S Kasprowicz, S C G MacGill.
Umpires: D Cowie (NZ), S Randell (Aus).

Ice Hockey

High-flying Eagles two steps nearer a unique grand slam

Vic Batchelder

THE fortunes of Ayr Scottish Eagles soared over the weekend when after Saturday's 7–0 victory at Basingstoke and a 1–0 win in Cardiff on Sunday, they heard that two of their closest rivals are to lose key players at a critical stage of the season.

Eagles, who need only four points from four games to clinch the Superleague title, are on course for a unique grand slam of all four national competitions in one season, having already won the B & H Cup. Two defunct clubs, Durham and Dundee, won three trophies back in the old British League, but four titles have not been at stake before.

Vince Boe's 13th-minute goal in Cardiff took the Eagles seven points clear of Manchester Storm, who have a game in hand but can no longer call on their second-top goalscorer Dominic Maltais. He quit yesterday to return to the United States to join the Hampton Roads Admirals for the East Coast Hockey League play-offs.

Since returning from a six-game suspension, imposed by Superleague in December for a kicking incident, Maltais's form had declined and he is looking to use the ECHL play-offs to secure a contract there next season.

The third-placed Nottingham Panthers hope to receive special dispensation to sign a replacement for their injured netminder Trevor Robins. He played in Panthers' 5–3 league victory at home to Sheffield on Saturday but missed the 7–2 Express Cup defeat at Bracknell the following evening.

Although the registration deadline was on December 15, Panthers' request is likely to find favour with Superleague, whose rules require clubs to have two netminders dressed and fit to play in every game.

Sailing

Record 16 for America's Cup

Bob Fisher

A RECORD number of 16 challenges for the America's Cup have been confirmed by the payment by each of a $250,000 (£150,000) bond.

They are from 10 nations; six are from the United States, two from France and one each from Switzerland, Hong Kong, Spain, Australia, Japan, Russia, Italy and Britain, whose challenge is through the Royal Dorset Yacht Club of Weymouth. The challenger selection trials begin in October, 1999.

Tracy Edwards and her 10-woman crew left Hamble yesterday en route for Ushant in Brittany where today they begin an attempt on the Jules Verne Trophy for the fastest circumnavigation of the globe in the 92ft catamaran Royal & Sun Alliance.

Tennis

Henman rues hard fall on Split carpet

Richard Jago

TIM HENMAN, bruised on the hard Australian courts and hoping for a good run on Croatian carpet, suffered another demoralising setback yesterday when he was beaten 6–3, 1–6, 6–3 by Germany's Rainer Schuttler in the first round of an ATP indoor tournament in Split.

Schuttler is ranked only 116 in the world so this was the second consecutive defeat by an opponent outside the top 100 for Henman, who had managed to gain a wild card here after his first-round exit in Melbourne.

Once again his second serve let him down. He won less than half of the points on it and a poor start led him into increasing uncertainty whether to play more conservatively or assertively.

"You lose confidence with results like this," admitted the British No. 2. "It's a very frustrating time. I've played indoors enough to know the way to play, but in the third set I played too cautiously.

"But this defeat does not make me a bad player. Like a soccer player who is not scoring goals you lose confidence in your form, but I will always have confidence in my ability."

Greg Rusedski, an another wild card hoping to make up for disappointments in Australia, has been made the top seed for this tournament. His first opponent will be Gianluca Pozzi of Italy, a fellow left-hander who recently rejoined the top 100 after bone surgery in his right leg.

Rusedski slipped two places to No. 8 in yesterday's world rankings after being overtaken by Petr Korda and Marcelo Rios, the Australian Open winner and runner-up respectively. In the quarter-finals the British No. 1 could meet the Dutch left-hander Jan Siemerink, who beat him in Stockholm in December.

IAAF cash injection for Britain, page 13

Woodward's high-risk strategy, page 15

Owen gets his England chance, page 14

Ramprakash out in the cold, page 15

SportsGuardian

England's standard-bearers return to the colours





Jeremy Guscott, left, will return the England rugby union team for their Five Nations opener, icy pitch permitting, in Paris on Saturday while Alan Shearer, like the Bath player hit by injury this season, is in Glenn Hoddle's squad for the friendly against Chile tomorrow week at Wembley. Full stories: rugby union, page 15; football, page 14

Back on centre stage

Big freeze hits super-stadium

Jon Henley in Paris

EMBARRASSMENT is growing in Paris because the brand-new Stade de France pitch is frozen solid — and unless something dramatic can thaw it by Saturday, England will be unable to play France there in their opening Five Nations rugby union match.

The red faces came as it emerged that the high-tech stadium, built at a cost of *£270 million, was not fitted* with under-soil heating. The playing surface, laid last October at a cost of £1,100 per square metre, has therefore been defenceless against the recent cold snap in France and is now rock-hard.

Designers chose not to instal permanent under-soil heating so as to avoid artificial growth of the grass during the winter, explained Eric de Branche, a spokesman for the construction consortium *that owns the stadium.*

"Obviously we regret this icing problem but it will be solved," he said. "We are taking all necessary steps to ensure the game can go ahead and are 100 per cent confident it will. These are teething problems. They're normal in a new venue."

England are due to arrive in Paris tomorrow afternoon, with the vast majority of their supporters in the city by Friday morning. The match is already a sell-out.

After urgent consultations with the French Rugby Federation, stadium officials covered the pitch late yesterday afternoon. And from tomorrow morning a special deicing cover will be laid over the turf and a battery of hot-air blowers will run constantly — interrupted only for training sessions — until late on the morning of the match.

"The consortium asked us to take control of this matter," said the federation's general secretary Jacky Laurans, adding that the pitch was frozen to a depth of 10cm (4in).

Eight blowers will be linked by hundreds of yards of perforated tubing from which a constant flow of warm air will circulate over the pitch beneath the heat-retaining cover, said De Branche.

"Basically, we are creating a mattress of hot air over the *entire pitch that will gradu*ally de-ice it. We are following the timetable recommended by the firm that laid the turf."

A combination of clear skies and overnight temperatures as low as –6C last month sent a warning signal to stadium officials of potential problems in the run-up to last Wednesday's inaugural football match there, a friendly between France and Spain.

About 40 square metres of turf have already been reseeded because parts of the pitch turned yellow. Environmentalists warned that the *polluted soil on which the sta*dium was built means the grass may never be entirely *healthy, but officials remain* confident that the turf, which will have to withstand nine of next summer's World Cup matches including the final, will be in perfect condition by the spring.

Time to blow the whistle on foul fans



Paul Hayward

FOR me the most interesting aspect of Eric Cantona's infamous kung fu kick was not what it said about him, but what it revealed about the things some football fans think they can get away with — and frequently do.

Matthew Simmons was a foul-mouthed racist who apparently believed buying a ticket for a football match entitled him to aim all manner of abuse at anyone outside his own tribe. The one positive effect of Cantona's assault was that it disabused the unlovely Simmons of that idea at least until he recovered his senses well enough to sell his story. "Off you go, Cantona," was how Simmons reported the exchange, "it's an early bath for you."

The thumping of a linesman (sorry, assistant referee) at Portsmouth on Saturday was an extension of the Matthew Simmons I've-got-my-*ticket-so-I-can-do-and-say*-whatever-I-want school of football supporting. It confirmed that some men's lives are so empty they can't distinguish between a load of blokes trying to get a bag of air into a giant hairnet and what's known outside of sporting arenas as real life.

Before the letters start rolling in, let's make one thing plain. Most football supporters are humane and rational people who, even if they do abuse the ref on Saturdays (*which most don't*), are quite normal again by the time they return home to start chopping the vegetables for dinner. The Japanese beat up effigies of their boss. We British say unspeakable things in football stadiums and behave like sad thwarted children when the three fallible people in authority don't give us exactly what we want and give it to us now.

*There is a terrible romanti*cism in this country about what terrace culture is really like. There are those who will tell you that all that spite and bile is really just a post-modern comic caper that's supposed to be viewed ironically. Well, aren't we all drowning in irony these days? The statistics show that more families and women are going to football, which is helping the *civilising process no end.* But any dad thinking of taking a child to a match knows that *sooner or later* he will have to explain to his son or daughter why the Buster Bloodvessel character behind is threatening to rip the opposition left-back's arms off.

Strange that a country with such a deferen*tial tradition should come over so anti-au*thoritarian when a middle-aged *man runs on to a football* pitch with *ill-fitting shorts* and a whistle in his mouth. We put up with the Royal Family but we think all football refs should be guillotined. When the unloading of workaday frustrations ends up with a linesman being knocked unconscious then we know that football is becoming far too serious for its own already over-inflated good.

SO where does the line fall? Is it okay to suggest every two minutes that a ref has managed to have sexual communion only with himself, to subject a man trying to do a difficult job to 90 minutes of loathing? And are football managers, with their constant complaining, encouraging the idea that refs and *linesmen are all incompetent* Mr Magoos who are genetically programmed to spoil everybody else's fun? In the Bath-Brive match in Bordeaux on Saturday the referee Jim Fleming was so whistle-happy he would have stopped the half-time tea given the chance. Rugby has many problems — insane factionalism being one of them — but at least the ref can go about his trade without being constantly told he's some kind of monster.

Many commentators felt the attack on Edward Martin was another bad day for football. More than *that it was* another bad day for football fans, which isn't the same thing. The game itself can't always carry the blame because a small proportion of those who follow it are determined to behave so badly. All across England, in parks and pub football, refs are being abused and assaulted for indulging minor power addictions and trying to help 22 *other people have a bit of fun.*

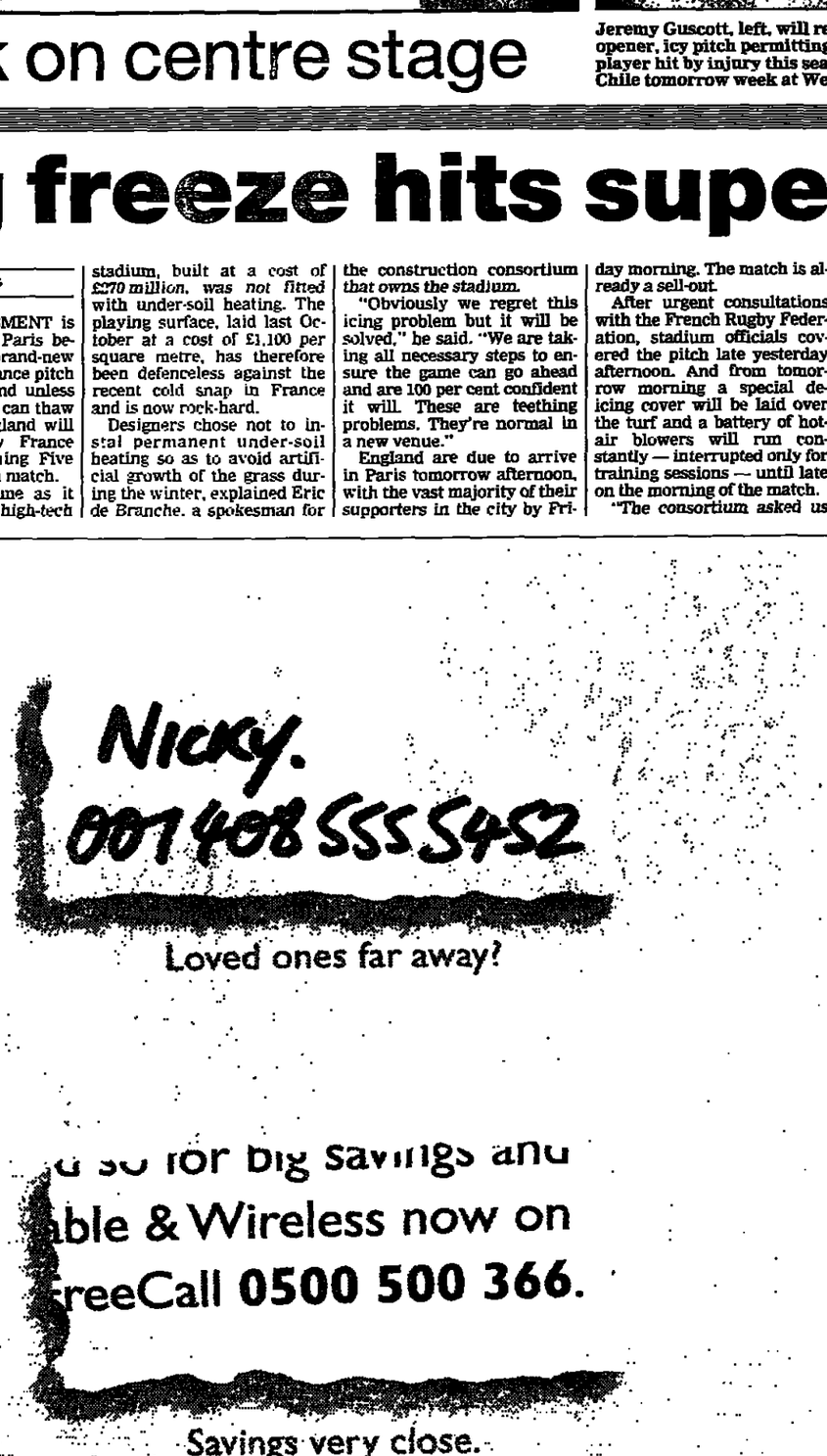
Cantona wasn't exactly performing a social duty in launching his studs into Matthew Simmons but at least he declined to buy into the idea that fans have a mandate to do or shout whatever they like. Football can't just be about supporters and their boundless wants.

Call goes out to collar Catt burglar

ANY seven-stone weakling *seen swaggering* down Twickenham's streets in Mike Catt's monogrammed England training shirt should be immediately detained under citizen's arrest; at least he should be easy to spot.

Items of Catt's kit, along with some belonging to the captain Lawrence Dallaglio, were stolen from a van at *HQ on Sunday night.* The England coach Clive Woodward said: "It is of little value to anyone, as it is obviously official kit, with the players' names embroidered on to the items and therefore easy to detect."

Anyone with any information should call Pam Cartwright on *0181 831 6505.*



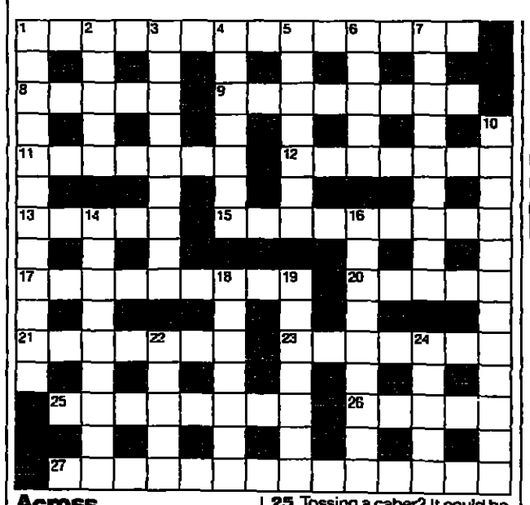
Up to the last moment her case continues to draw support from unusual quarters. Pat Robertson, the TV evangelist, surprised even his own followers by calling her an 'extraordinary lady'

The last hours of Karla Faye Tucker

G2 front

Guardian Crossword No 21,188

Set by Mercury



Across

1 Where children are taught to get on? (8,6)
8 First religious site specially designed for ceremonies (5)
9 Complaints made when old lady goes to toilet? (8)
11 Bolted *relief valve to an old* copper (7)
12 Appointment accepted by *stout preacher* (7)
13 Patient starts talking in class (5)
15 Endless street party gradually getting louder (9)
17 Putting tar in our silo turned out to be tedious (9)
20 Was inquisitive boy rejected by top journalist? (5)
21 Is having name and number inserted on key excessive? (7)
23 Entertainer needing car repaired to ring club (7)
25 Tossing a caber? It could be a cause of disease! (8)
26 Individualist takes one in both hands (5)
27 Way of paying if transporting dray on vehicles (4,2,8)

Down

1 Dog wanted to lie alongside miner endlessly (6,6)
2 Bill races one into the room (5)
3 Having spread dais with soft fruit, vanish (9)
4 Turned on crazy crossword compiler caught *wandering* (7)
5 Save cruel student being imprisoned (7)
6 Shy dropout hiding in special hotel (5)
7 Shades one entering closed back street (9)
10 Lie back before pushing point into floor (6,6)
14 Layers of earth under a bus start shaking (9)
16 Lieutenant admittedly against leading Italian singers (9)
18 Go on too long before function's finished (7)
19 Waves on lake damaged plant growing near the coast (3,4)
22 Cut a large amount up before church (5)
24 Refuse to go here having turned up, say, for a spree (5)

Solution tomorrow

AVERSE CRIMEA
D M H I E O N
EYRE ABSOLUTION
S N T Q I H M
AMIDST LASVEGAS
A E A H R L
ELABORATE SWAY
E E I
USER ADMITTING
E F S G M E
SWEETPEA PIGSTY
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